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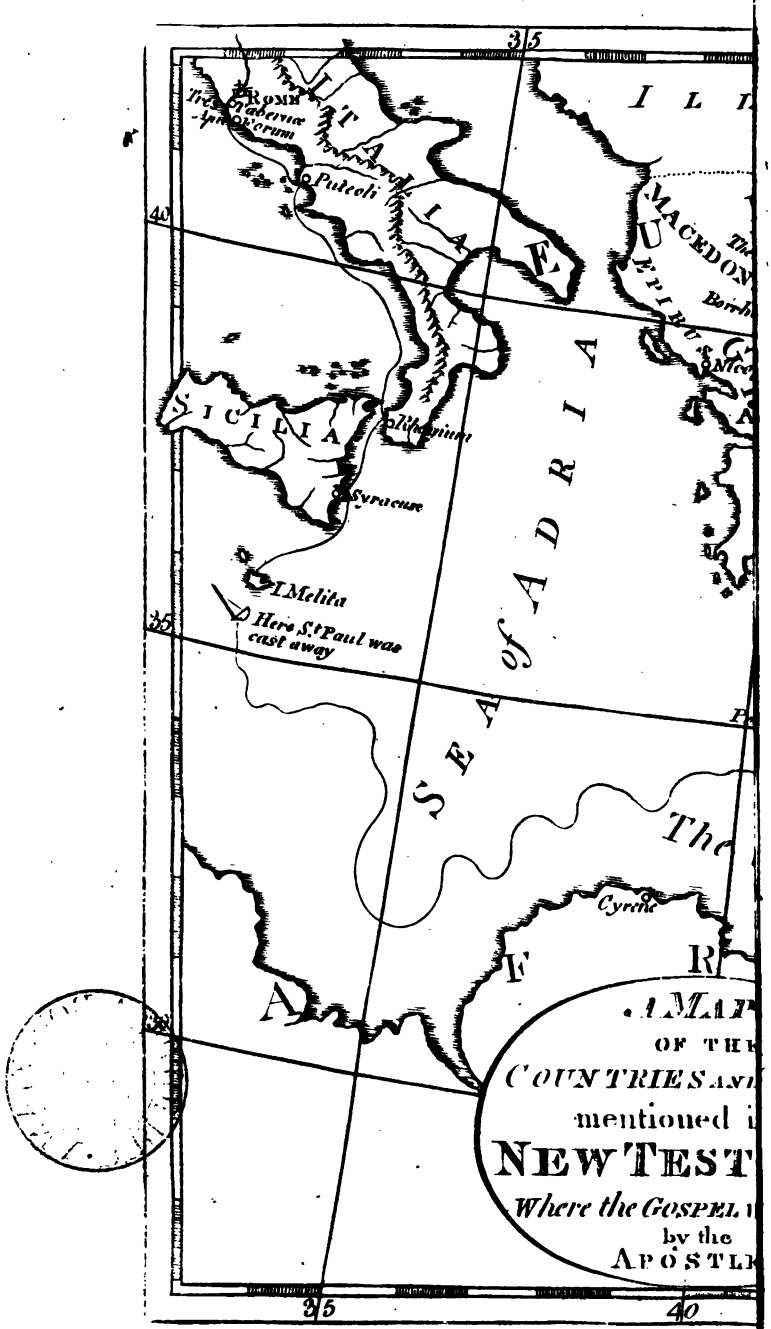
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THE

PROGRESS

OF

CHRISTIANITY,

(Historical and Chronological;)

FROM ITS FIRST

PROMULGATION AT JERUSALEM,

TO ITS LEGAL

ESTABLISHMENT under CONSTANTINE:

ALSO, A SKETCH OF THE PRIMITIVE

CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

With Notes,

GEOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL.

BY THOMAS WOOD.

We preach CHRIST CRUCIFIED:——CHRIST the POWER of GOD, and the WISDOM of GOD. . . . . *PAUL.*

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1805.

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Preface.

SINCE the Public very juſtly claims the privilege of deciding for itſelf, on every production that excites its attention, the ſubmiſſions and excuſes, uſual on publication, are of little importance:—the Author, therefore, means to ſay nothing more, by way of Apology, than that he preſents this performance to the world, truſting, as it is compoſed with ſoberneſs and truth, it will be read with attention and candour.

The great utility of a work of this deſcription, (nothing on the ſame plan, it is preſumed, being extant,) induced him to engage in it; and the congeniality of the ſubject with the miniſterial character, has rendered it a pleaſing employment of the time he could ſpare, from his more immediate labours in the Vineyard of Chriſt. It is the province of the Chriſtian Miniſter to unfurl the banner of the Croſs, diſplay the bond of Love which unites Chriſtians, repel the inſidious attacks of Infidels, and proclaim the whole Truth as it is in Jeſus.

Though the arrangement is new, thoſe who are familiar with Theological writings may have met with much of the information interſperſed in the following ſheets; the abſolute neceſſity of having recourſe to foreign aſſiſtance in ſuch an undertaking being obvious. The authorities uſed are noticed with care; but the quotations are not marked, becauſe of the ſtyle being frequently altered, while the ideas are retained.

No ſubject can be more gratifying to the Chriſtian, than to read of the aſtoniſhing diſplays of the wiſdom, love, and power of God, as exhibited in *the* REDEMPTION *and* SALVATION *of mankind by* JESUS CHRIST! As this contains an unparalleled view of the Divine perfections, it is the higheſt ſubject of finite comprehenſion, and conſequently has the firſt claim to our regard. The *Book* which reveals it, is grand in its ideas, ſublime in its doctrines, holy in its precepts; and eſtabliſhed, by the accompliſhment of its predictions, the irrefragable evidence of its miracles, and the character of its writers. In ſhort, this deſign of the Supreme Being, ſo wonderful in its contrivance, benevolent in its nature, and beneficial in its conſequences, is intended to counteract the evil of ſin, and reſtore his lapſed creatures to his favour and moral image.

The Work commences with a deſcription of the degenerate ſtate of religion among the Jews,

alſo of the irrational Polytheiſm of the Heathen, when Chriſt viſited the World to redeem and ſave Mankind. It proceeds in tracing the rapid and extenſive Progreſs of the Chriſtian faith; ſhowing the aſſiduity and perſeverance of the Apoſtles and their immediate Succeſſors, and developing the Cauſes of their amazing ſucceſs. Herein the Reader may behold Light break forth, with effulgent ray, in a benighted age, when the veil of darkneſs had obſcured the eyes of all denominations of men. —The approximate view of the PRIMITIVE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, what it really was, may aſſiſt him to diſtinguiſh between truth and error, and to conclude, from juſt premiſes, what Chriſtians in any age ought to be, in their principles, experience, and practice.

In the courſe of the Work are deſcribed, the evil propenſities of human nature;—the riches of Divine grace in Chriſt;—the character of an Evangelical Miniſter of the Goſpel;—the efficacy of the Chriſtian religion, when faithfully preached;—the efforts of Devils, alſo of wicked men, acting under the pernicious influence of prejudice or malevolence of heart, to oppoſe the diſſemination of religious truth; and the amiable tempers, upright converſation, and holy actions of regenerate Chriſtians.—Uſeful criticiſm is not altogether excluded, certain emphatical words in the *New Teſtament* being particularly noticed.—While it is calcu-

lated for the adult Chriſtian; it is hoped, the Hiſtorical Narrative, Geographical Deſcription, Chronological Order, and Variety of Incident, will render it acceptable and edifying to the riſing Generation.

Having enlarged ſome parts conſiderably more than was intended, the Remarks on the Revival of Religion, in the preſent Day, (as mentioned in the Propoſals,) are omitted; but as it is probable a *ſecond volume* will, at a future day, accompany this, they will be brought forward, with other important particulars.

The Author cannot conclude, without gratefully acknowledging the very liberal and reſpectable patronage with which he has been favoured; and, at the cloſe of the ſecond volume, intends giving the Names of the Subſcribers.

THE

PROGRESS of CHRISTIANITY, &c.

Of the State of the Jews and the Heathen, when Christ came into the World to redeem and save Mankind.

All truth is from the sempiternal source
Of light divine. But Egypt, Greece, and Rome,
Drew from the stream below. . . . . .
In vain they pushed inquiry to the birth
And spring-time of the world; asked, Whence is man?
Why formed at all? and wherefore as he is?
Where must he find his Maker? with what rites
Adore him? Will he hear, accept, and bless?
Or does he sit regardless of his works?
Has man within him an immortal seed?
Or does the tomb take all? If he survive
His ashes, where? and in what weal or woe?
Knots worthy of solution, which alone
A Deity could solve. Their answers, vague
And all at random, fabulous and dark,
Left them as dark themselves. Their rules of life
Defective and unsanctioned, proved too weak
To bind the roving appetite, and lead
Blind nature to a God not yet revealed.

COWPER's *Task.*

THE rapid and extensive Progress of the Christian Religion, on its first promulgation, when all the circumstances which attended it are duly considered, was a remarkable phenomenon, and is a subject which deserves to be particularly noticed, and its real causes traced out, both by the doubting Sceptic and the philosophical Unbeliever, as well as by the serious Christian.

The coming of the Messiah into the world, and the grace that should attend it, had long been the ennobling theme of prophecy: and the Prophets inquired, and searched diligently, what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow*.

* 1 Pet. i. 10, 11.

At the time Chriſt came, he was earneſtly wiſhed, and confidently expected by the nation of the Jews. And that expectation was ſo much divulged abroad, that two Heathen hiſtorians, Suetonius and Tacitus, have inſerted it in their writings, as a thing worthy of remark. "Many," ſays Tacitus, "had a perſuaſion that it was contained in the ancient writings of the prieſts, that at that very time the eaſt ſhould prevail, and that ſome deſcendant from Judah ſhould obtain the univerſal government*." "An old and conſtant opinion," ſays Suetonius, "commonly prevailed through all the eaſt, that it was in the fates, that ſome one ſhould riſe out of Judea who ſhould obtain the government of the world †." I ſuppoſe Tacitus means, by the ancient writings of the prieſts, the writings and prophecies of the Old Teſtament: and the "Eaſt" is one of the names given the Meſſiah, and which we render the *Branch* ‡.

And Suetonius tells us farther, that the belief and expectation of this among the Jews was ſo great at that time, that it cauſed them to rebel againſt the Romans. And this expectation, which was ſo general, fired Herod with ſuch jealouſy and rage, upon the wiſe men's coming from the eaſt, and inquiring, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? that he attempted to deſtroy the heavenly babe, at the expence of the lives of ſo many infants.------When Chriſt appeared, he ſet up a kingdom ſpiritual in its nature, equitable in its laws, unexampled in its privileges, happy in its ſubjects, wide in its extent, and perpetual in its duration.

The three grand monarchies of the world, the Aſſyrian, the Perſian, and the Grecian, were ſubſided; and the fourth, which was the Roman, and greater than all the reſt, ſucceeded, and, under Auguſtus Cæſar, was arrived at the ſummit of its ſtrength and glory. The Roman empire, after exiſting for ſeveral hundred years as a commonwealth, was reduced to a monarchy. Pompey, Craſſus, and Julius Cæſar, three of the greateſt men in Rome, had agreed to ſupport each other, and

* Tacit. Hiſt. c. 5, p. 62. † Suet. in Veſp. c. 4. ‡ Zach. vi. 12.

to divide the government of the empire among themselves. As long as Crassus lived, he balanced the power between the other two; but, at his demise, they began to rival each other, and neither of them would be satisfied with less than the whole. Pompey could not bear an equal, nor Cæsar a superior; and, therefore, they raised a civil war, in which Pompey was conquered by Julius Cæsar, at Pharsalia. Pompey went into Egypt, where he was basely put to death by the officers of the young Ptolemy, the last king of Egypt, A. M. 3956, ante A. D. 48.

Julius Cæsar was a man of boundless ambition, and of an artful address; and had, by his valour abroad, and generosity and insinuating manners at home, gained the esteem of almost all descriptions of men. He first aspired to the consular dignity, and then to the dictatorship, or supreme power, which, though he was successful in gaining, he did not long hold; for, after three years and a half, some leading men among the Romans, who resented his enslaving a free people, stabbed him publicly in the senate house.

Octavius Cæsar succeeded him in the empire. He was the son of Accia, the sister of Julius Cæsar, who, by his will, had made him his adopted son. After various struggles and sharp contests, more particularly with Mark Antony, he obtained the supreme power; which he held for upwards of forty years: and, upon the whole, behaved like a good prince; considering the absolute power of which he was possessed, and the great corruption and wickedness of the times*. Octavius had told the senate, that he never intended to hold the sovereign authority, nor had received it with any other view than to revenge the murder of Cæsar†, and to deliver Rome from the continual calamities to which it was exposed. A civil war, which lasted thirty years, had occasioned great miseries, and much reduced the number of the citizens of Rome: they afterwards increased, by several laws, particularly the Julian law for

* Benson's History of the First Planting of Christianity, v. 1, p. 183, 184.

† *Cæsar* was a name common to the emperors, as *Pharaoh*, and afterwards *Ptolemy*, to the Egyptians.

the encouragement of matrimony*. Ten days before he obtained the name of Auguſtus, the ſenate had given him the title of Prince, and, with it, the government of the Republic for ten years. Many before him had been called Princes of the Senate, but no perſon had ever been ſtyled Prince, as if he alone were Prince of the Republic and the Roman People. He received the ſurname of Auguſtus the 17th of January, in the year of Rome 727; ſome time previous to which, he had made an offer of reſigning the government to the ſenate. The name Auguſtus was given him, to expreſs his grandeur, majeſty, and reverence; and that by the advice of Munatius Plancus; when others would have had him called Romulus, as if he were the founder of the city of Rome†.

The Jews had loſt their liberty, and, for ſeveral years, been in ſubjection to the Romans. This ſubjection originated in a quarrel which happened in the

* VIRGIL, at the end of the firſt book of the Georgics, cloſes with a ſupplication to the gods, (according to the heathen mythology,) for the ſafety of Auguſtus, and the preſervation of Rome.

Ye home-born deities, of mortal birth!
Thou father *Romulus*, and mother Earth,
Goddeſs unmov'd! whoſe guardian arms extend
O'er *Thuſcan Tiber's* Courſe, and *Roman* tow'rs defend;
With youthful *Cæſar* your joint pow'rs engage,
Nor hinder him to ſave a ſinking age.
O! let the blood already ſpilt, atone
For the paſt crimes of curſt *Laomedon!*
Heav'n wants thee there; and long the gods, we know,
Have grudg'd thee, *Cæſar*, to the world below:
Where fraud and rapine, right and wrong confound;
Where impious arms from every part reſound,
And monſtrous crimes in ev'ry ſhape are crown'd.
The peaceful peaſant to the wars is preſt;
The fields lie fallow in inglorious reſt:
The plain no paſture to the flock affords,
The crooked ſcythes are ſtraighten'd into ſwords:
And there *Euphrates* her ſoft offſpring arms,
And here the *Rhine* rebellows with alarms;
The neighb'ring cities range on ſev'ral ſides,
Perfidious *Mars* long plighted leagues divides,
And o'er the waſted world in triumph rides.
So four fierce courſers ſtarting to the race,
Scour through the plain, and lengthen ev'ry pace:
Nor reins, nor curbs, nor threat'ning cries they fear,
But force along the trembling charioteer.

Dryden's Virgil.

† Sanadon's Notes on Horace's Carmen 2, ad Auguſtum.

Asmonean family*. Queen Alexandra, by gratifying the Pharisees, governed that kingdom peaceably nine years, from the death of her husband to the end of her own life; when her eldest son, Hyrcanus, who was of an indolent and quiet temper, succeeded to the crown. At the end of only three months, Aristobulus, his younger brother, wrested it from him. Antipater, the Idumean, and father of Herod the Great, availed himself of this, to raise new disturbances and commotions among the Jews. Alexander Jannæus, the late king of the Jews, had advanced, to the government of Idumea, the father of Antipater; who himself, having been bred in the court of Alexander Jannæus, and that of queen Alexandra, had ingratiated himself into the favour of Hyrcanus, in expectation of being advanced by him, when he should come to the crown.

On the deposition of Hyrcanus, Antipater incited him first to apply to Aretas, king of Arabia, to restore him to the kingdom; and afterwards to the Romans, to whose decision Aristobulus at first agreed to refer the matter. They both pleaded their cause before Pompey, who was at that time at Damascus; and, on his being inclined to favour Hyrcanus, Aristobulus retired, and put Jerusalem in a posture of defence. This so incensed Pompey, that he seized Aristobulus, and having laid him in chains, besieged Jerusalem.

The party of Hyrcanus opening the gates of the city to him, he laid siege to the Temple, whither the other party had retired, and after three months took it, and the castle Baris also†, which was afterwards called

* ASMONEANS, was a name given to the *Maccabees*, descendants of *Mattathias*, who, according to *Josephus*, *Antiq. lib.* 12. *cap.* 8, was the son of *John*, the grandson of *Simon*, and great grandson of *Asmoneus*. The family of the *Asmoneans* became very illustrious in the later times of the *Hebrew* commonwealth; it was the support of the religion and liberty of the *Jews*; and possessed the supreme authority, from *Mattathias* to *Herod* the *Great*. The *Asmoneans* were of the course of *Joarib*, which was the first class of the sons of Aaron; and, therefore, on failure of the former pontifical family (which had now happened by the flight of *Onias*, the son of *Onias*, into *Egypt*) they had the best right to succeed to that station. And, under this right, *Jonathan* took the office, when nominated to it by the then reigning king in *Syria*; being also elected thereto, by the general suffrage of the people. *Prid. Connect. &c. p.* 2. *book* 4.

† This tower or fortress, was originally built by the *Asmonean* princes, who called it Baris; but Herod the Great, having repaired it, changed its name, in

the *tower of Antonia.* And having put to death the chiefs of Ariſtobulus's faction, and demoliſhed the walls of Jeruſalem, he made Hyrcanus both high-prieſt and prince of the Jews; but reduced his dominions to narrower bounds, and made the kingdom tributary to the Romans. This was in the year 63 before the Chriſtian æra, about the time of our Midſummer. Joſephus, the celebrated Jewiſh hiſtorian, always dates the loſs of their liberty from that time.

The religion of the Jews was in a deplorable ſtate, ſcarcely any veſtiges of its purity being left. They were divided into three ſects, *Phariſees, Sadducees,* and *Eſſenes.* The Phariſees had their name from the Hebrew verb *pharaſh,* to divide or ſeparate, becauſe they ſeparated themſelves from commerce with other people, from the cuſtoms and manners of the world, gave themſelves to the ſtudy of the Law, and affected extraordinary ſanctity of life. This ſect was one of the moſt ancient and conſiderable among the Jews; but its origin is not well known. Jerome places the beginning of the Phariſees rather late, ſaying, they proceeded from the two famous ſchools of Hillel and Shammai. It is known from Joſephus*, that Shammai, or Samæus, lived in the time of Herod the Great; conſequently not long before our Saviour. The Rabbins alſo acknowledge Hillel, if not the founder of the ſect of the Phariſees, at leaſt as the chief ornament of it. But probably Calmet is far more accurate, who places the riſe of this ſect about A. M. 3820, ante A. D. 184.

The Phariſees held the writings of Moſes and the Prophets to be divine. Their principal doctrines were theſe: 1. That the kingdom of the Meſſiah was an earthly one. 2. That the keeping of the Moral Law con-

honour of his friend M. Antony. It was ſituated towards the weſt angle of the temple, upon an eminence cut ſteep on all ſides, and encloſed with a wall three hundred cubits high—It was built in the form of a large ſquare, having within the magnificence of a palace, and the conveniencies of a city; and without, ſeveral fortifications, and a tower at each corner to ſtrengthen and defend it. So that, conſidering its form and ſituation, we may be allowed to ſay, that it was a citadel to the temple, even as the temple was, in ſome ſort, a citadel to the town. *Calmet's Dictionary; and Fleury's Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory.*

* Antiq. lib. 14, cap. 17.

ſifted only in an external obedience to the letter of it. They condemned only the actual commiſſion of ſin, and thought themſelves allowed to entertain evil deſires, thoughts, and deſigns, if not attended with outward acts of ſin. 3. That men were juſtified by the works of the law, without the obedience and mediation of Chriſt; that obedience to the letter of the law was their righteouſneſs before God, for which they were accepted of him. 4. They believed the ſoul to be immortal, and acknowledged the exiſtence of angels and ſpirits: they admitted a kind of tranſmigration of the ſouls of good men, which might paſs from one body to another; whereas thoſe of wicked men were condemned to dwell for ever in priſons of darkneſs*; or that a ſoul, which had ſinned in one body, might afterwards be puniſhed in a more imperfect one. In conſequence of theſe principles, ſome of the Phariſees ſaid, that Jeſus was John the Baptiſt, or Elias; or one of the Prophets†; that is, the ſoul of one of thoſe great men had paſſed into the body of our Saviour. 5. They believed alſo the reſurrection of the dead, and admitted all the conſequences of it. Biſhop BULL, in his *Harmonia Apoſtolica*, has clearly proved that they held a reſurrection of the body, and that they ſuppoſed a certain bone‡ to remain uncorrupted, to furniſh the matter of which the reſurrection body was to be formed. They did not, however, believe that all mankind were to be raiſed from the dead. A reſurrection was the privilege of the children of Abraham alone, who were all to riſe on Mount Zion; their

* Joſeph. Antiq. lib. 18. cap. 2. & de Bello, lib. 2. cap. 12.

† Matt. xvi. 14.

‡ In proof of the reſurrection it is affirmed by them, that a bone, called Luz, ſeated in the back, is the principle of future life; and that it had been demonſtrated by Joſhua ben Hananiah. That great rabbi took the bone Luz, and threw it into water, which did not diſſolve it. He threw it into the fire, which could not conſume it. He laid it on an anvil, and ſtruck it with a ſledge-hammer: the anvil was cleft, and the hammer was broken; but Luz remained uninjured. This is one glaring inſtance of the abſurd gloſſes of the Talmudiſts on the Hebrew Scriptures. Dr. Lightfoot has publiſhed a large collection of paſſages from the traditionary writings of the Phariſees, under the title of *Hebrew*, and *Talmudical Exercitations*; which throw a great light on our Saviour's invectives againſt the Phariſees. The Phariſees' corrupt commentaries on the Jewiſh law, have been of great uſe among Chriſtians, as they throw various lights on the cuſtoms, and proverbial phraſes of the Jews; and make the Scriptures better underſtood. *Gilpin's Expoſition of the New Teſt. gen. pref. p. 3, 4. ſecond edit.*

uncorruptible bones, wherever they might be buried, being carried to that mountain below the ſurface of the earth*. 6. The ſtate of future felicity, in which the Phariſees believed, was very groſs: they imagined that men in the next world, as well as in the preſent, were to eat and drink, and enjoy the pleaſures of love, each being re-united to his former wife. 7. The Phariſees ſeem to have had ſome confuſed notions, probably derived from the Chaldeans and Perſians, reſpecting the pre-exiſtence of ſouls; and hence Chriſt's diſciples aſked him concerning the blind man, "Maſter, who did ſin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind†?" And Joſephus, who was a phariſee, believed that the demons that poſſeſſed men, were the ſouls of wicked men, which entered the bodies of others, and were ſometimes driven from thence by exorciſms§. 8. With the Eſſenes, they held abſolute predeſtination; and, with the Sadducees, free-will: but how they reconciled theſe ſeemingly incompatible doctrines is no where explained. 9. Joſephus ſays, the Phariſees were much addicted to aſtrology, thinking that, by means of the ſtars, they might arrive at the foreknowledge of the ſecrets of Providence: a doctrine much exploded by judicious men. 10. But the main diſtinguiſhing character of this ſect was, their predilection and zeal for the tradition of the elders; which they preciſely obſerved, and taught to be of equal authority with the written Law; yea, practically, they exalted the traditions above the Law. By adding

* The Jews are directed, in the office of mourners, when they look upon the graves of any of their nation, to offer up this prayer: "Bleſſed be the Lord our God, who formed you with judgment, preſerved you alive; delivered you up to Death; who knows the number of you all; who will raiſe you up again; who will reſtore you with judgment: bleſſed art thou, O Lord, who giveſt life to the dead: may the dead live, with my dead body may they riſe again."
Pocok. Port. Mos.

† John ix. 2.

§ See Matt. viii. 29—31. It ſeems to appear not only from Joſephus, and other Jewiſh writers, but alſo from the ſcriptures themſelves, that the Jews uſed ſometimes to caſt out devils by exorciſms. I ſuppoſe theſe exorciſms were ſimilar to the ancient oracles; and were a ſort of juggle, or confederacy, between them, and evil ſpirits; which, before Chriſtianity, we have much reaſon to believe was the caſe. At the ſame time, as the Delphic prieſt pretended to divine authority; ſo alſo did the Jewiſh exorciſt. *Gilpin's Expoſition, vol.* 1. *p.* 44. The Talmud relates ſome ridiculous ſtories of working miracles by the *Tetragrammaton*, or the *unutterable name*; that is, by mentioning the word Jehovah.

these traditions to the law of Moses, they set aside almost the whole law of God, making that void* which was their only rule for faith and practice.

There were many superstitions and foolish rites obtruded upon the Jews, after their return from the Babylonian captivity, which were pretended to have been delivered to Moses on Mount Sinai, along with the written law; and that these, forming the traditional law, and intended as an exposition of it, were, by Moses, conveyed verbally to Joshua; by him to the Elders; by these to the Prophets; and by them to the great Sanhedrim, from whom it descended to after ages. The traditions chiefly urged by the Pharisees were, 1. That none should eat until they had washed their hands. This they made a matter of religion, and enforced the necessity of it so much, that, suppose a man had not enough of water both to drink and to wash with, he should rather wash than drink, though he immediately expired with thirst. 2. That a man must wash when he came from the market, because having there to do with divers individuals he might be polluted unawares. For fear they should have touched any unclean thing, they washed from their fingers' ends up to their very elbows†. 3. That it was unlawful to eat with sinners. They would not so much as touch a Publican, nor any man whom they supposed to lead an ill life; peremptorily refusing to eat, drink, or pray with him‡. 4. That they should fast twice in the week, on *Monday* and *Thursday*; because Moses, as they said, went up to Mount Sinai on a Thursday, and came down on a Monday. These fasts, of supererogation, they observed with greater rigour than other Jews; and upbraided our Saviour and his disciples, for eating and drinking as other men, whereas they, and the disciples of John the Baptist, fasted often§. 5. That on the Sabbath it was not allowable to heal a sick person, though Christ accomplished it by a word speaking‖. They were displeased,

* Matt. xv. 6. † Mark vii. 4.

‡ Matt. xi. 11. Luke vii. 39. Thus the Pharisee in the temple *stood by himself, and prayed*, as a modern author has translated the passage; he would not deign to come near the Publican, for fear of pollution.——See Luke xviii. 11. Isa. lxv. 5. § Mark ii. 18. ‖ Luke vi. 7. 8. John ix. 16.

that on this day the sick were brought to be healed; and when a man, who had been cured of a palsy, carried his bed on the sabbath-day, the offence was unpardonable*. From all which it was concluded, Jesus Christ could not be a man sent from God, because he so little observed that profound rest, which they ostentatiously insisted was due to this day†. And numerous similar traditions were maintained, which may be seen in the Talmud; the whole subject whereof is to dictate and explain those fallacies, which this sect imposed to be believed and observed.

These traditions, that were by our Saviour censured as the mere fictions and inventions of men, and which rendered the law of God of none effect, were generally received among the Scribes and Lawyers, or Doctors of the Law, who were writers and expounders thereof; and also by a large majority of the common people, who held them in high veneration. Their zeal for the traditions of the elders was such, that they not only valued themselves more on a due observance of them, than of the law itself; but said, the written law was, in many places, obscure, scanty, and defective, and would be no perfect rule to them without the oral or traditional law; which, containing a full, complete, and perfect interpretation of all that was in the other, supplied its defects, and solved all its difficulties‡.

When our Saviour appeared in Judea, the Pharisees were in great credit among the people, because of the reputation of their learning, extraordinary sanctity, and

* John v. 8, 9. † John ix. 16.

‡ These traditions were collected into a book, which they called the Mishna. Rabbi Judah on this occasion being rector of the school at Tiberias, and president of the Sanhedrim in that place, undertook the work, says the learned Prideaux, and compiled it in six books, each consisting of several tracts, which altogether make up the number of sixty-three; and that the Mishna was composed towards the middle of the second century after Christ, under the Empire of Antoninus Pius. Dr. Lightfoot differs from Prideaux, and says, that Rabbi Judah compiled the Mishna about A. D. 190, in the latter end of the reign of Commodus; or, as some compute, A. D. 200. And Dr. Lardner gives it as his opinion, that this work could not have been finished before A. D. 190, or later. Thus the Mishna was formed, on which book, both the Babylonian and Jewish Talmuds are comments. The original has been published, with a Latin translation by Surenhusius; with notes of his own and others, from the learned Maimonides, &c. in six vols. fol.

exact obſervance of the traditions: and, in conſequence of their religious demeanour, though only hypocritical pretence, it was proverbial, among the ignorant and credulous multitude, *That if two men only ſhould enter the kingdom of heaven, one of them would be a Scribe, and the other a Phariſee.* All the veſſels they uſed, their utenſils, and very beds, were frequently plunged in water: and they even bathed themſelves, by way of purification*. Their frequent faſts, long prayers, ſcrupulous payment of tythes, and abundant alms, were vitiated by pride, oſtentation, hypocriſy, and ſelf-love. They wore large rolls of parchment on their foreheads and wriſts, on which were written certain words of the law; and affected to have fringes and borders, at the corners and hems of their garments, broader than thoſe of other Jews, as badges of diſtinction, and denoting them to be more ſtrict obſervers of the law than others.

Epiphanius relates ſurpriſing effects of their auſterities†. Some almoſt deprived themſelves entirely of ſleep. Others laid on a plank of a foot broad, that if they ſlept too ſoundly, they might fall to the ground, and, being awakened, go to their prayers. Sharp and rugged ſtones, or thorns, ſerved others for beds, that, even in their ſleep, they might practiſe mortification. Jerome aſſerts‡, that ſome fixed thorns to the bottom of their robes, which, as they walked, might prick and draw blood from their legs; and thus familiarize ſuch hardſhips, and oblige themſelves to think on God. But what availed theſe voluntary ſufferings, with Him who looks to the heart, and diſapproves of that which is unſupported by his authority. This ſect was not extinguiſhed by the ruin of the Jewiſh commonwealth. The greater part of the modern Jews§ belong to it, being, as much as their anceſtors, devoted to the traditions.

* Joſeph. in vita ſua. † Hæres 16. ‡ In Matt. xxiii, 27.

§ So late as the year 1798, a Jew, who had been apprehended in the Weſt-Riding of Yorkſhire, as a vagrant, and whoſe inſolence and brutality declared him one of the loweſt of his people, was very clamorous, at an early hour in the morning after his commitment, for water. "I want to waſh," ſaid he, "for I want to pray.—I cannot pray till I be waſhed;—and I want to pray "for the Gentiles."——Though this be a ſolitary inſtance, could the greateſt devotee, among the Phariſees, be more ſtrictly ceremonious?

Thus we ſee what the chief ſect among the Jews were, in their principles, diſpoſition, and practice. Our Saviour termed them hypocrites; and, when his accuſation is fully conſidered, never was the charge of hypocriſy better founded. They paid tythe of mint, and aniſe, and cummin, and omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith. They made clean the outſide of the cup, and of the platter, but within they were full of extortion and exceſs. They were like unto ſepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful to the eye*, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanneſs. Even ſo they alſo outwardly appeared righteous to men, doing all their works to be ſeen of them, but within they were full of hypocriſy and iniquity†.

The ſect of the Sadducees was very different from that of the Phariſees, and had its origin as follows. Antigonus Sochæus, a Jew, (who was born at Socho, on the borders of Judea, and flouriſhed in the time of Eleazer the high-prieſt, about 300 years before Chriſt, and was a diſciple of Simeon the Juſt,) often, in his lectures, inculcated on his ſcholars, that they ought not, as ſome improperly taught, to ſerve God, as ſervants do their maſters, for temporal rewards, but only from principles of filial fear and love. This doctrine was miſinterpreted by his followers, and extended to the

* Sepulchres in the eaſt, Dr. Shaw tells us, are ſtill adorned with great care.

† See Matt. xxiii. Much has been ſaid on hypocriſy: a modern author gives the following as the origin and application of the word. Anciently maſks were worn by players on the theatre, while acting their parts, to enable them to repreſent perſons and characters, which they themſelves were not. Their manner was, to put on a maſk, generally over the whole head: by which means a perſon, whoſe own viſage was disfigured, might wear a beautiful maſk; while he himſelf frowned, his maſk might ſmile; *that* might be complacent and ſerene, though his own temper was moroſe and peeviſh; or that might exhibit the character of a hero, or a deity, of Alexander, or Jupiter, while the wearer was far enough from reſembling either, in form, in manners, or in attributes. If we conſider a hypocrite as a perſon playing under a maſk, we ſhall come pretty near to the true import of the word: "Beware of the leaven of the Phariſees, which is HYPOCRISY: for there is nothing COVERED," veiled, *maſked*, "that ſhall not be *uncovered*, q. *unmaſked*—Luke xii. 1, 2, 3: and well do ſuch counterfeits deſerve the woes levelled againſt them in the goſpel; for, was not every player under a maſk, conſcious of his wearing that diſguiſe? conſcious of having put on, and of continuing to wear it?—*Calmet, Fragments. p.* 122.

rewards of a future life; and particularly by Sadoc and Baithofus, two of his difciples, who taught their followers, that no future recompence was to be expected; and, therefore, that there would be no refurrection of the dead. They even denied the world to come, and the exiftence of angels or fpirits*. And hence arofe, about 200 years before Chrift, the fect of the Baithofæi or Sadducees†.

In objecting to the refurrection, the Sadducees agreed with the Heathen: and, their denying the immateriality, and, confequently, the immortality of the foul, proves, they had imbibed the fentiments of Epicurus. They did not deny that man had a reafonable foul, but maintained it was mortal‡. They differed from Epicurus only in allowing, that God by his power created the world, and governs it by his providence; and, for the carrying on of his government, hath ordained, in this world, rewards and punifhments. Whereas the Epicureans, who were deemed no better than atheifts, and detefted by the better fort of Heathens, denied a divine providence; and faid, God was altogether unconcerned in the government of the world. Cicero accufed Epicurus of atheifm, and faid, Whatever veneration he pretended to have for the gods, yet he was no better than an atheift, and mentioned a god in his philofophy, merely to avoid falling under the difpleafure of the Athenian Senate.

The Sadducees fuppofed God to be the only Spirit; and it has been alfo imputed to them, that they thought even Him to be corporeal. It is remarkable how they could deny angels, and yet receive the five books of Mofes, in which the appearance of angels is fo frequently mentioned. Some fuppofe they underftood all thofe fcriptures, that fpeak of the appearance of angels, as importing nothing but a bodily fhape, vifible for a time, influenced and moved by the divine power, and converfing with thofe to whom it was fent. And others, that they confidered angels, not as

* Matt. xxii. 23. Mark xii. 18. Luke xx. 27. Acts xxiii. 8.

† *Rees's New Cyclopædia.* ‡ *Joseph.* lib. 2. *de Bello*, cap. 12.

individual beings, and ſubſiſting of themſelves, but as powers, emanations, or qualities inſeparable from the Deity, as the ſun-beams from the ſun*: or, that, perhaps they held angels to be mortal; juſt as they thought of human ſpirits.

It is ſtrange, alſo, how they could make any pretenſions to religion, who denied the reſurrection of the body, the immortality of the ſoul, and a future world of recompence! This was tearing up, at once, the very foundations of all religion and morality; limiting the exiſtence of man to a very ſhort period; and ſo making this life incompatible with the perfections of God, and the nature and reſponſibility of man. A common ſaying among the Jews, excepting the Sadducees, was, *All true Iſraelites are partakers of the future world.* In the tranſlation of Enoch, before the giving of the law, and of Elijah, under it, they had ſenſible demonſtration of the reality of another world, and that man would there exiſt. The venerable patriarchs, Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, in all their peregrinations, looked for a city that had foundations, whoſe builder and maker is God. And, to convince the Sadducees that their hope was not deluſive, our Saviour told them, that theſe perſons, ſo renowned in the ſcriptures for their faith, were yet alive, with regard to their ſouls. "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Iſaac, and the God of Jacob," and "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." If there were not a life to come, we ſhould be at a loſs to find out a ſufficient reaſon why we live at all, and be ready to look on ourſelves as the moſt uſeleſs and ſuperfluous race of beings in the creation. How awful would be the ſuppoſition of this? how unhappy its influence on mankind! We ſhould not only ſorrow without hope, for thoſe of our dear relatives already departed this life; but alſo, live in fearful expectation of death extinguiſhing the flame of animal life in ourſelves. The ſcriptures every where repreſent death, not as the extinction of our being, but as a paſſage out of this world into another.

* This was the opinion of ſome *Jews* in the time of *Juſtin*. *Dialog. cum Tryphone*, p. 358. See *Grotius* on *Matt.* xxii, 23. and M. *Le Clerc* on *Acts* xxiii. 8.

Auſtin, when ſpeaking of it, calls it *Oſtium Æternitatis*, the gate of, or entrance into eternity*.

It has often been aſſerted, that the Sadducees received only the five books of Moſes; and, as a proof of it, that our Saviour, when he argued with them, in defence of a future ſtate or reſurrection from the dead, did not make uſe of the Pſalms and the Prophets, but of the law of Moſes; and confuted their flimſy reaſonings, and overturned their weak objections out of the Pentateuch: but Scaliger produces what Calmet calls good proofs to vindicate them from this†. Scaliger obſerves, that they did not appear in Iſrael till after the number of the holy books was fixed, and that, had they ſelected any part of the Canon, the Pentateuch was leſs favourable to them than any other book, ſince it often mentions angels and their appearances. Beſides, the Sadducees were preſent in the temple, and at other religious aſſemblies, when the books of the prophets were read, as well as thoſe of Moſes. They were in the chief ſtations of the nation; many were even prieſts, and ſome of them admitted to the high-prieſthood itſelf: which ſhews the ſtate of religion then among the Jews. Would the Jews have ſuffered, in theſe employments, perſons who rejected the greater part of the ſcriptures? Menaſſeh-ben-Iſrael ſays expreſsly‡, that indeed they did not reject the prophets, but explained them in a ſenſe very different from that of the other Jews. The Sadducees were excellent in one point, they rejected all the traditions; kept only to the text of the law; and maintained, that only what was written ought to be implicitly received§.

* *The following lines of Addiſon, are ſtrongly and beautifully deſcriptive of the* IMMORTALITY *of the* SOUL.

The ſoul, ſecure in her exiſtence, ſmiles
At diſſolution, and defies its power.
The ſtars ſhall fade away, the ſun himſelf
Grow dim with age, and nature ſink in years;
But thou ſhalt flouriſh in immortal youth—
Unhurt, amidſt the war of elements,
The wreck of matter, and the craſh of worlds.

† See *Calmet's Dictionary*; from which valuable work I have received much aſſiſtance, in deſcribing the ſects among the Jews.

‡ De Reſurrect. mort. lib. 1. cap. 6. § Joſeph. Antiq. lib. 13. cap. 18.

Under the Aſmonean princes the Jews grew proſperous, powerful, and rich; which, as is too often the caſe, produced great arrogance, luxury, and vice. To quiet their conſciences, and free themſelves from the dread of a future reckoning for ſin, were the cauſes which introduced among them, this doctrine, againſt a judgment to come. The greater part of thoſe in the higher circles, becauſe their paſſions were ungovernable, and their actions immoral, embraced this doctrine; preferring the pleaſure and grandeur of this life, to any thing, however excellent, in another. This is confirmed by Joſephus; he ſays, the number of the Sadducees was leſs than that of the other ſects, but they were men of the beſt quality, and poſſeſſed the greateſt property*. The rich man, mentioned by our Saviour, was probably of this ſect; for he received his *good things* in this life†, and neglected all preparation for a better world.

The Sadducees were much reduced, or all cut off, when the Roman army deſtroyed Jeruſalem; and no mention was made of them for ſeveral ages after. Their name was revived in the *Karaites*, who, in the way of reproach, are called Sadducees by the other Jews; yet agree with them in nothing, but in rejecting all traditions, and adhering only to the written word; where, indeed, the Sadducees began, but afterwards went further, into the impious doctrines now deſcribed.

As the Sadducees acknowledged neither puniſhments nor recompences in another life, and were remarkable for a fierce and cruel temper; ſo when they ſat in judgment, they were much more rigorous and ſevere upon criminals, than the Phariſees. This is not to be wondered at; for all their happineſs being placed in earthly things, and limited within the compaſs of the preſent life, they muſt have reckoned the diſturbers of it to deſerve the ſevereſt torments; that, by theſe, they might deter men from giving them any uneaſineſs.

The Eſſenes are not mentioned in the New Teſtament, except it be under the name of Phariſees; and they ſeem to have been originally of the ſame ſect. Although

* Antiq. lib. 13. cap. 18. and lib. 18. cap. 2. † Luke xvi. 25.

our Saviour frequently cenſured the Phariſees and Sadducees, yet he never ſpake of the Eſſenes; probably, being honeſt and ſincere people, they gave no cauſe for that reproof and cenſure, which the guile and hypocriſy of others very juſtly deſerved. With the Sadducees, they acknowledged or expected no reſurrection of the body; but went far beyond them, believing the immortality of the ſoul; and that a future ſtate, of eternal happineſs or miſery, would be according to the conduct of individuals in this life.

Their rules of living are handed down by Joſephus, Philo, and Pliny; and, from theſe ſources, ſome of the Chriſtian Fathers have alſo deſcribed them. Whence we learn, they were in number about four thouſand men, and had their name given on account of their piety*. They chiefly lived in country villages, avoiding cities, in abhorrence of the vices which were familiar among the citizens; being ſenſible, that as breathing in corrupted air occaſions diſeaſes, ſo converſing with evil company often makes an indelible impreſſion upon the ſouls of men.

They held riches, comparatively, in contempt, and maintained a common participation of goods. It was a fixed rule, that whoever entered into their ſect muſt give all his property into the public ſtock of the ſociety, to be enjoyed as one poſſeſſion, among brethren in the ſame family, for every man's uſe; ſo that, in the whole number, none might be found lower than another by reaſon of his poverty, nor any elevated above the reſt by his riches. Something like the Moravians in our day, who ſtyle themſelves *Unitas Fratrum* or the *United Brethren*†.

They held marriage in no eſteem, but taking other men's children, while yet tender and ſuſceptible of any impreſſion, treated them as though they were of their own fleſh and blood; and carefully trained them in the

* Philo ſays, they were called Eſſenes from the Greek word ὅσιος, which ſignifies *holy*.

† The Moravians, in general, profeſs to adhere to the Augſburgh confeſſion of faith. There is a large community of them at Fulnec near Leeds, which excites the curioſity of the traveller; and they have places of worſhip in various parts of the kingdom.

peculiarities of their ſect. But all were not of this opinion; ſome entered the marriage-ſtate, yet with views ſolely for procreation.

They were ſo very exact in their devotions, that, before the riſing of the ſun, they converſed on no ordinary matters, but offered up prayers; and, at meals, none were permitted to taſte before a bleſſing was implored; nor to withdraw until thanks were returned; thus conſtantly beginning and ending with praiſe to God for his beneficence. They diſtinguiſhed themſelves above the other Jews, in abſtaining from all manner of work on the Sabbath. On this day, they went to their ſynagogues, and, according to ſeniority or continuance in the ſociety, ſat in order, the juniors below their ſeniors; all arranging themſelves with decency for hearing the word. They were inſtructed in holineſs, righteouſneſs, juſtice, economy, politics; in the knowledge of what was proper to be choſen, and what to be avoided; and the Deity was repreſented as the cauſe of all good, and never the author of evil.

Their words were as ſacred as the oaths of other men. An oath they avoided taking, looking on it as worſe than perjury; and affirmed, He is already condemned as faithleſs, who is not to be believed without calling God to witneſs. They were great curbers of their paſſions, contemners of adverſity, and overcame ſufferings by greatneſs of mind; inſomuch that they highly eſteemed diſſolution itſelf, when it was to be undergone on an honorable account. Strangers of their own ſect were received kindly, and entertained liberally, as though they had been old acquaintances. Next to God, they had ſo high a veneration for their legiſlators, that it was death to ſpeak evil of them.

When any deſired to unite with them, they were kept a whole year *without*; being compelled to ſubmit to the ſame diſcipline, or regulations, with themſelves; and, after giving full proof of their continence and temperance, were received into a nearer converſation and rule of life. However, they were not yet introduced to their common table, and full fellowſhip; but remained on trial for two years longer; and then,

if they appeared worthy, gained admiſſion. Such as were found guilty of any enormous crime they expelled. In the adminiſtration of juſtice, ſentence was never given but when an hundred, at leaſt, were preſent; and the decree then paſſed remained irrevocable. And notwithſtanding they embraced ſeveral errors, theſe traits in the character of the Eſſenes, which could not be found among the other two ſects, rendered them far more the objects of regard.

As the *Herodians* are mentioned ſeveral times by the evangeliſts*, it may be proper to ſhew, that they were not a religious ſect, but a political party among the Jews. When the Romans put Hyrcanus in poſſeſſion of the government; but, at the ſame time, obliged him to hold it by their favour and permiſſion; that laid the foundation of conſiderable diſſentions. Some ſubmitted to the Roman power, thinking it juſtly founded, by conqueſt and ſurrender; while others objected, that only a junto had ſubmitted, and not the whole body of the people; that treachery, not conqueſt, had brought Jeruſalem into ſubjection; and, conſequently, that the Romans were uſurpers, and Hyrcanus and his followers betrayers of their country.

Herod, improperly ſtyled *the Great*, (after having procured, of M. Antony, the death of Antigonus, with whom ended, after continuing 129 years, the reign of the Aſmonean family,) obtained the kingdom of Judea, which was confirmed to him by Auguſtus, a ſhort time before the birth of our Saviour. He was born at Aſcalon, about 68 years B. C; his father was Antipater the Idumean, or Edomite, and, therefore, an alien by birth. His character is juſtly held in deteſtation; for he was an execrable tyrant, and his footſteps to the throne were marked with blood. Under the Romans, he fought his way to the government of the Jews, and aſcended the throne by the ſlaughter of the ſanhedrim; by which a period was put to their dominion. His barbarity was as fatal to his own family as to his ſubjects; for he murdered his beautiful wife Mariamne, her mo-

* Matt. xxii. 16. Mark iii. 6; viii. 15; xii. 13.

ther Alexandra, her brother Ariſtobulus, her grandfather Hyrcanus II, and his own ſons Alexander and Ariſtobulus. At the birth of Chriſt, in the vain hope of cutting off the Meſſiah, he cauſed all the infants of Bethlehem, under two years of age, to be maſſacred. From Euſebius we learn, that ſoon after he had done this, the judgment of God overtook him; he was plagued with an incurable diſeaſe, having a burning heat in his bowels, by which he became very offenſive to thoſe about him, a burden to himſelf, and, at length, mad with extreme anguiſh, which continued till he expired, within three years after the birth of Chriſt, aged ſeventy.

After his death, the Romans, as a mark of patronage to his family, changed the monarchy, by dividing the kingdom into four parts, and appointing a governor for each; who, becauſe he governed a fourth, had the name of tetrarch. Archelaus, Herod's eldeſt ſon, was tetrarch of Judea and Samaria; but, for his ill government, was ſoon deprived of it: and, after this, Judea was under a procurator; and, it is thought, Pilate was the fifth in ſucceſſion. Herod Antipas*, another ſon of Herod, by his wife Cleopatra, a native

* Herod Antipas married the daughter of Aretas king of Arabia; whom he divorced about A. D. 33, to marry his ſiſter-in-law Herodias, wife to his brother Philip, who was ſtill living. John the Baptiſt, exclaiming againſt this inceſt and illicit connexion, was impriſoned in the caſtle of Machæus; and afterwards beheaded by Herod's order, at the requeſt of the daughter of Herodias, who had previouſly been inſtructed by her mother to aſk his head. How myſterious is the providence, ſays an eminent author, which left the life of ſo holy a man in ſuch profane hands! Which permitted it to be ſacrificed to the malice of an abandoned harlot, the petulance of a vain girl, and the raſhneſs of a fooliſh, perhaps, drunken prince, who made a prophet's head the reward of a dance! But we are ſure the Almighty will repay his ſervants in another world, for whatever they ſuffer in this. Aretas, to revenge the affront which Herod had offered to his daughter, declared war againſt him, and overcame him in a very obſtinate engagement; and many Jews thought this defeat a judgment ſent upon him for the death of John.—*Joſeph. Antiq. lib.* 18. *cap.* 5. (*al.* 7.) *ſect.* 1, 2.—This Antipas is the Herod who, being at Jeruſalem, the place of his nativity, at the time of our Saviour's paſſion, (*Luke* xxiii. 11.) ridiculed him, by dreſſing him in a white robe, and ſending him back to Pilate, as a mock king, whoſe ambition gave him no umbrage.——Herod being afterwards detected as a party in Sejanus's conſpiracy, was baniſhed by the emperor Caligula into Lyons in Gaul; whither Herodias accompanied him. The time when he died is not known, but it is certain he died in exile, as well as Herodias. And if credit may be given to Nicephorus, (*Hiſt. lib.* 1. *cap.* 23.) Salome, the daughter of Herodias, fell into the ice as ſhe was walking over it, which, cloſing ſuddenly, ſevered her head from her body.

of Jerusalem, was tetrarch of Galilee and Paræa. His brother Philip was tetrarch of Iturea and Trachonites; that tract of land on the other side Jordan, which had formerly belonged to the tribe of Manasseh. And Lysanias (probably descended from a prince of that name, who was some years before governor of that country,) was tetrarch of Abilene, a large city of Syria, whose territories reached Lebanon and Damascus.

Herod was a zealous servant of the Romans, and promoter of their tribute; and those Jews that were in this interest, and cheerfully paid tribute to Cæsar, were called Herodians. Some of these, no doubt, might be weak enough to imagine, that Herod was the Messiah, or so wicked as to pretend that they did, in order to serve his cause. They were not only distinguished from the other Jews, by falling in with Herod's scheme of subjecting himself and his dominions to the Romans, but likewise, by complying with many of their Heathen usages and customs. This symbolizing with idolatry, upon views of interest and worldly policy, was probably that leaven of Herod, against which our Saviour cautioned his disciples. It is farther probable, that they were chiefly of the sect of the Sadducees; because what is called the leaven of the Sadducees*, is also called the leaven of Herod†.

Hence we see, the Pharisees and Sadducees or Herodians, respecting their political principles, were at variance; and that which contributed not a little to make this controversy still greater, was what Josephus and Eusebius relate concerning Judas the Gaulonite. He, about the time of the taxation, in which (as St. Luke says,) our Saviour was born, disquieted the minds of many, by representing the decree of Augustus, for that purpose, as a mark of infamy and servitude not to be borne. This man is said to have instituted a particular sect, one of whose tenets was,—That no Jew ought to pay tribute, nor acknowledge any sovereign Lord, but God only; and that, being his peculiar people, they were bound to maintain their liberty, especially against

* Matt. xvi. 6. † Mark viii. 15.

profane and uncircumciſed pretenders, and ſuch they deemed the Roman emperors. So that the paying of tribute to Cæſar, which was acknowledging his right to govern, was not, at this time, a queſtion of mere curioſity, but a matter of moment with regard to practice: nor was it a point of bravery only, in the eſteem of the Phariſees, and others of that party, but a ſcruple of conſcience, and a debate of religion, whether this tribute ſhould be paid or not*.

The conjunction of the Herodians, therefore, with the Phariſees againſt Chriſt, is a memorable proof of the keenneſs of their reſentment and malice; eſpecially, when we conſider that they united in propoſing an enſnaring queſtion, on a ſubject which was the ground of their mutual diſſent, namely, whether it was lawful to pay tribute to Cæſar, the Roman emperor? and, provided he anſwered in the negative, the Herodians would accuſe him of treaſon againſt the ſtate; but if in the affirmative, the Phariſees were as ready to excite the people againſt him, as an enemy to their civil liberties and privileges. Our Saviour, well-knowing their craft and ill deſign, aſked, why they did thus cunningly and hypocritically try to enſnare him? and bade them bring a penny, that he might ſee it. They brought the coin, which was the Roman denarius, anſwering to ſeven-pence halfpenny of our money. Two of theſe were paid by way of tribute, and no other coin would anſwer; that thereby it might appear they were under the dominion of the Roman emperor. On their declaring, in anſwer to his queſtion, that the image and ſuperſcription were Cæſar's, he ſaid, Give to Cæſar the things that are Cæſar's, and to God the things that are God's†. The Phariſees and Herodians, being aſtoniſhed at his warineſs, and ſilenced therewith, left him, and went their way.

The *Samaritans* were inhabitants of the city of Samaria, and the province, of which it was the capital. Some time after the ten tribes had revolted from the houſe

* Stanhope on the Epiſtles and Goſpels, vol. 4. p. 587——
† Mark xii. 13—17.

of David, in the thirty-first year of Asa*, king of Judah, began Omri, the sixth king, to reign over Israel. When he had reigned six years in Tirza, he purchased, for two talents of silver, a hill, on which he built a city, and called it Samaria, from the name of Shemer, of whom he had bought the ground. This hill was fruitful, and in an advantageous situation, being, by the computation of Josephus, a days' journey from Jerusalem.

From that time it became the capital city for the kings of Israel, who spared no expence nor labour to make it the strongest, the finest, and the richest, possible; until † Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, came with an army, and, after a siege of three years, took it, and carried captive the ten tribes of Israel beyond the Euphrates; dispersing them in Media, that they might not revolt any more. For, previous to this, Shalmaneser had entered Palestine, subdued Samaria, and obliged Hoshea, the son of Elah, to pay him tribute; but, in the third year, being weary of payment, Hoshea took secret measures with So, king of Egypt, to remove this subjection. And thus Shalmaneser ruined the city and kingdom of Samaria, which had subsisted two hundred and fifty-four years, from A. M. 3030, to 3283; and before Christ 721 years.

Esar-haddon, the grandson of Shalmaneser, who is called Asnapper‡, succeeded his father Sennacharib, in the kingdom of Assyria. Having enlarged his dominions, and augmented his strength, by seizing Babylon and Chaldea, he marched with a great army to recover what his father had lost in Syria and Palestine§. And then he took captive most of the few Israelites, whom his grandfather had left in the land of Israel, carrying them into Babylon and Assyria; and, to plant the country, he brought people from Babylon, Cuthah, Ava, Hamath, and Sepharvaim‖.

These new inhabitants, made up of different nations, all heathens, received the name of Samaritans, from

* 1 Kings xvi. 23, 24. † 2 Kings xvii. 5, 6; and xviii. 9—12.
‡ Ezra iv. 10. § 2 Kings xix. 35; and 2 Chron. xxxii. 21.
‖ 2 Kings xvii. 24. Ezra iv. 2, 10. and Prideaux's Connex. vol 1. p. 30.

the country in which they were now ſettled. Being an idolatrous and a very wicked people, they were at firſt much moleſted, and many of them devoured, by lions. Eſar-haddon*, being informed of this, and imputing it to their ignorance of the manner of worſhipping the God of the country, (whom he conſidered as a local deity, who would not be appeaſed, unleſs he were worſhipped by its inhabitants,) ſent among them a Jewiſh prieſt, whom his grandfather had carried away captive, to teach them the rites of the Hebrews. They thought it right to blend this religion with that which they profeſſed before; and ſo, for a while, continued to worſhip their idols, in conjunction with the God of Iſrael, not perceiving that theſe two religions were incompatible.

It does not appear that, in Samaria, there was any temple common to all theſe people who came from beyond the Euphrates; but every one had been left to his own diſcretion, and worſhipped where he thought proper; until Nehemiah (who was born at Babylon during the captivity,) attempted a reformation at Jeruſalem; that thoſe Jews who had married women of other nations, ſhould, according to the law of Moſes†, put them away, left they ſhould prove ſnares, and entice them to idolatry. The Jews were under a command not to make intermarriages with any foreign nations‡, but, whilſt in Babylon, they regarded it not§. Upon their return to their own land, they continued the ſame practice; and, among others, a ſon of Joiada, the ſon of Eliaſhib, the high-prieſt, whoſe name was Maneſſes, as Joſephus reports, contracted an alliance with Nicaſo‖, the daughter of Sanballat, the Horonite, deputy governor of Samaria.

Maneſſes, with other Jews, being hoſtile to the laudable attempt of Nehemiah to remove this enormity, fled to Samaria, and took protection under his father-in-law. As a conſiderable number of Jews flocked thither, the governor obtained leave of Darius Nothus, king of Perſia, to whom Samaria was then in ſubjec-

* 2 Kings xvii. 24. 29. † Neh. x. 30; and xiii. 23, &c.
‡ Deut. vii. 3. § Ezra ix. 2. ‖ Joſeph. Antiq. l. 11. c. 8. § 2.

tion, to erect a temple for them on mount Gerizim*, and made Manesses high-priest, in opposition to the Temple at Jerusalem.

From that time, Samaria became the common refuge for the vagabond Jews. So that, if any were called to an account for a breach of the Jewish law, especially in its rituals †, such as eating forbidden meats, breaking the sabbath, or the like, they presently fled to Samaria, and were favourably received. By this, the Samaritans became a mixed people, consisting partly of Jews, and partly of the posterity of those whom the kings of Assyria had brought thither ‡. However, by having a temple, the ritual service, and so many Jews among them, they laid aside idolatry, and conformed to the law of Moses; but are said not to have received the prophets, nor regarded the traditions of the elders.

Beside other things, what most incensed the Jews against the Samaritans, was the above-mentioned apostacy of Manesses, and his companions. This antipathy of the Jews arose to such a height, that they published a bitter curse against them; strictly forbidding all communications, except what necessity urged; and even denying them common civilities. And thus it continued for several hundred years, even to our Saviour's time; as appears from the woman of Samaria's interrogating him, how he, being a Jew, asked water of her, who was a woman of Samaria? To which, she adds, as the reason of her surprise, that "the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans§."

The Jews viewed the Samaritans as apostates, heretics, and vile corrupters of their religion: and, when

* BENSON, in his History of the First Planting of the Christian Religion, says, Josephus (*Antiq. Jud. l.* 11, *c.* 8. § 4.) through a great defect among the Jews, in the Chronology of the Babylonian, and Medo-Persian empires, ascribes this grant to Alexander the Great: whereas, according to the most exact chronology, it must have been a grant of Darius Nothus, almost an hundred years before the Persian empire was conquered by Alexander the Great. *See Benson's History, vol.* 2. *p.* 146. *Sir Isaac Newton's Chronology, p.* 357, 365. *Prideaux's Connex. vol.* 1. *p.* 410. &c. 8vo. *edit. printed* 1722.

† Joseph. Antiq. l. 11. c. 8. § ult.

‡ Benson's Hist, of the First Planting of Christianity, vol. 1. p. 144, 146.

§ John iv. 9.

branding any one with infamy and abuse, they called him a Samaritan, as they did our blessed Saviour,—"Say "we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a de-"vil *?" This rancorous spirit on the Jews' side, provoked the same on the part of the Samaritans; which they sufficiently evinced, in denying our Saviour a passage, or any refreshment; because they understood he agreed with the Jews, in believing that Jerusalem, and not Gerizim, was the place of worship; which was the grand question or controversy between them. The Samaritans urged, that, as some of the Patriarchs had worshipped upon mount Gerizim †;—as God had ordered the blessings to be pronounced from thence upon Israel ‡, when they came out of the land of Egypt;—and as Joshua had, accordingly, caused the blessings of God to be pronounced from thence;—therefore, that men ought there to perform their devotions. The Jews had the direct testimony of divine revelation, to worship God in the temple at Jerusalem. And thus it has often happened, that controversies, arising from differences in religion, are the most hot and uncharitable.

Having considered the religious, moral, and political state of the Jews, that of the Heathen world next falls under consideration. This includes the nations unacquainted with the covenant of grace, in Christ, and who worshipped idols and false gods.

Noah, the tenth from Adam, was the second father of mankind. He lived 600 years among the inhabitants of the old world, who, for their audacious wickedness, were at length drowned by the deluge; the tallest trees, the strongest towers, the loftiest mountains, affording no refuge from the spreading ruin. The Ark, which the Almighty authorized and directed him to build, for

* John viii. 48. † Gen. xii. 6, 7; and xiii. 4; and xxxiii. 18, 19, 20.
‡ Deut. xxvii. 11, 12.

the preſervation of himſelf and family, was a remarkable providence, and ſerved to condemn the wicked, for their unbelief, profligacy, and impenitence. We may trace the certainty of the preſervation of Noah and his family in the Ark, from the waters of the deluge *, among the Chaldeans, Egyptians, the Indian Bramins, the Chineſe, and the Americans †. The enormous maſs of wickedneſs being removed, the new world began its courſe in a purified ſtate.

Stimulated by the moſt lively gratitude to the Author and Preſerver of his exiſtence, Noah, immediately upon his leaving the ark, erected an altar, and offered a burnt ſacrifice of every clean beaſt and every clean fowl. This act of piety proved highly acceptable to God, who graciouſly affirmed, that he would no more curſe the earth for man's ſake; but, on the contrary, that it ſhould retain all its privileges, and enjoy an uninterrupted ſucceſſion of ſeaſons, till the period of its final deſtruction; and he ſet his bow in the clouds, for a token of a covenant between him and the earth. And, no doubt, Noah delivered religion pure in its principle, deſign, duties, and obligations, to his children; and urged it, by arguments of terror, drawn from the deſtruction they had ſeen of the old world, and motives of piety, from God's paternal regard exerciſed towards them; of which ſo recent a proof had been

* Proofs of the certainty of the Deluge exiſt to this day. A learned author, in examining the truth of divine revelation, has noticed this particularly, and enforced it as an argument for the divine authority of the Scriptures. "Whereas Moſes aſſures us, ſays he, that *the waters prevailed fifteen cubits above the higheſt mountains*, let the mountains themſelves be appealled to for the truth of this aſſertion. Examine the higheſt eminences of the earth, and they all, with one accord, produce the ſpoils of the ocean, depoſited upon them on that occaſion, the ſhells and ſkeletons of ſea-fiſh and ſea-monſters of all kinds. The Alps, the Apennines, the Pyrenees, the Andes, and Atlas, and Ararat, every mountain of every region under heaven, from Japan to Mexico, all conſpire, in one uniform, univerſal proof, that they all had the ſea ſpread over their higheſt ſummit. Search the earth, and you will find the mouſe-deer, natives of America, buried in Ireland; elephants, natives of Aſia and Africa, buried in the midſt of England; crocodiles, natives of the Nile, in the heart of Germany; ſhell-fiſh, never known in any but the American ſeas, together with entire ſkeletons of whales, in divers other countries; and what is more, trees and plants of various kinds, which are not known to grow in any region under heaven. All which are a perfect demonſtration, that Moſes's account of the deluge is inconteſtibly true." *Part* 1. *diſſert.* 2.

† Mavor's Univerſal Hiſtory, vol. 1. p. 122, 123.

given, and, by which, they must long have been seriously impressed,

United under one common head, they most probably lived in tents, and, according to the most early custom, removed from place to place, for the better convenience of pasturage and the like; proceeding from Ararat, where the ark rested, until, as they journeyed thus eastward, they arrived at a plain in the land of Shinar, where they pitched their tents, and continued, being delighted with the situation. This land is the pleasant valley, along which the river Tigris runs, comprehending the country of Eden, the happy seat of Adam in his state of innocence; near which, it is likely, his righteous descendants dwelt before the flood; and consequently Noah, as the guide of his family, may well be supposed to have been desirous of returning, and directing his course thither.

Noah lived after the deluge 350 years, and Shinar became the nursery of rising generations: whence his descendants dispersed colonies into other parts of the globe. According to the vulgar opinion, he divided the world among his three sons; to Shem he gave Asia, to Ham Africa, and to Japheth Europe; or, more accurately, to Shem the south of Asia, to Japheth the north of Asia, and to Ham Africa. Neither Europe nor America seem to be hinted at, unless, perhaps, in the expression, "Japheth shall be *enlarged*;" first, by discovering Europe; secondly, by discovering America: which appears to have been peopled, either from Europe, or from the north of Asia*.

The original plantations could not have been extensive, because the inhabitants of the earth were not numerous. Dr. Wells says†, the division was made about an hundred years after the flood, at the time of Peleg's birth; whose name, in the Hebrew language denoting a *division*, it is supposed, was given him by his father Heber, in reference to that signal event; when, says the learned Mede, beside women and children, their number in

* Calmet's Dictionary, Fragments, p. 39.

† Well's Geography, vol. 1. p. 50, 51. printed 1801.

all could not be above ſeven thouſand. And there is no reaſon to imagine, that all the perſons mentioned by Moſes went to the ſeveral countries they poſſeſſed at the ſame time; the different plantations being made at different periods, and by a gradual progreſſion.

The ſpacious plain in the land of Shinar affording means, and unity of language favouring ſuch a deſign, certain perſons, prompted by pride, and influenced by views of ambition and aggrandizement, raiſed themſelves to be heads and leaders; and, ſeizing on this ſituation, reſolved to build a city, to be the metropolis of the world, and ſeat of univerſal empire; and a tower, whoſe top ſhould reach unto heaven: this they intended, among other purpoſes, to command every part of the city, and to keep off any body of men who might attempt to break in upon them. But, after the commencement of the work, the Lord confounded their language, ſo that they could not underſtand one another's ſpeech; which cauſed them firſt to divide, and afterwards to diſperſe*. The tower they had begun to build, from that event, was called *Babel*, or *confuſion*: the ſame with Babylon, which was either the firſt city built by Nimrod, or the capital of his kingdom. It is probable, that the tower of Babel was originally devoted to idolatrous worſhip; for which, it is well known, it ſerved in after ages, as we have accounts of the *idols*, &c. found there; particularly, of a

* It is likely that every family, had its peculiar dialect, or, rather, that ſome dialect or form of ſpeaking was given to thoſe families whom God deſigned to make one colony in the following diſperſion. Into how many languages the people were divided, it is impoſſible to determine. The Hebrews fancy ſeventy, becauſe the deſcendants of the ſons of Noah, as enumerated in ſcripture, are juſt ſo many: the Greek fathers make them ſeventy-two, becauſe the verſion of the LXX adds two more, (Eliſa among the ſons of Japhet, and Canaan among the ſons of Shem,) and the Latin fathers follow them. But this is all conjecture, and built upon a very weak foundation. For in many places, ſo many people concurred in the uſe of the ſame ſpeech, that of the ſeventy ſcarcely thirty remain diſtinct, as Bochart has obſerved: and, among theſe, others have ſuppoſed, that the Hebrew, Chaldee, and Arabic, in the eaſt; the Greek and Latin in the weſt; and the Finniſh, Sclavonian, Hungarian, Cantabric, and the antient Gauliſh, in the North; are generally reputed originals: beſides ſome more that might be diſcovered in Perſia, China, the midland parts of Africa, and all America, if we had but a ſufficient knowledge of the hiſtory of theſe people.——*Stackhouſe from Patrick's Commentary, and Wotten on the Confuſion of Languages at Babel.*

ſtupendous image of the Sun, made of gold; whoſe height was forty feet without the pedeſtal, its weight a thouſand Babyloniſh talents, and its value equal to three millions and a half of our money. Archbiſhop Tenniſon ſuppoſes, Babel was conſecrated by its builders to the ſun, as the cauſe of drying up the waters of the deluge. The Jeruſalem Targum, and ſome of the great Jewiſh Rabbies, ſeem to have been of the ſame opinion. And antiquity aſſures us, the top of it was dedicated to *Bel*, or the *Sun* *, which theſe eaſtern idolaters worſhipped under the ſymbol of fire†. It was repaired and beautified by Nebuchadnezzar, and called the Temple of Bel, or Belus, or Lord‡.

To gratify the reader, I introduce here a clear diſtinction, made by a modern author, between the diviſion of the earth by Noah, and the confuſion of tongues at Babel, which have, by the generality of writers, been confounded together.---It is not eaſy to fix the preciſe era of the building of the Babylonic tower, ſays he, becauſe the ſacred hiſtorian does not connect it with any of the various dates that he ſpecifies. I cannot think, however, that this ſtupendous work was undertaken at ſuch a *very* early period after the deluge, as the birth of Peleg, which, according to the chronology of the Hebrew Pentateuch, at leaſt, was at the cloſe of the firſt poſtdiluvian century; becauſe it appears to be phyſically impoſſible, that mankind ſhould have ſufficiently multiplied in ſo ſhort a ſpace of time §. But, however this may be, there is perhaps no juſt ground for ſuppoſing, that the birth of Peleg, and the building of the tower, were contemporary; notwith-

* Dr. Coke's Commentary, Gen. xi. 4.

† The hiſtorian, Herodotus, in whoſe days this tower was ſtanding, deſcribes it, as conſiſting of eight towers, in alluſion to the Noëtic Ogdoad, placed one upon the other, and gradually diminiſhing in ſize. At the top of it was a large temple, and towards the bottom a chapel, in which was placed a ſtatue of Jupiter-Belus, or the ſolar Noah. *Herod. lib. cap.* 181, 183. The pyramidical form was moſt probably adopted in honour of the Sun, ſays Faber, and in imitation of the tapering flame, as indeed the very name of *pyramid* ſeems to imply; and the tower itſelf was uſed for a two-fold purpoſe, aſtronomical obſervations, and idolatrous devotion. *Faber's Diſſertation on the Myſteries of the Cabiri, vol.* 2. *p.* 384. and his *Horæ Moſaicæ, vol.* 1. *p.* 212.

‡ An account of this may be ſeen in Prideaux, vol. 1.

§ See various calculations in Anc. Univ. Hiſt. vol. 1. p. 361.

ſtanding they are uſually placed at the ſame era, and notwithſtanding the name *Peleg* is thought to allude to the diſperſion from the plains of Shinar. *Two* entirely different events, ſubſequent to each other in point of time, appear in fact to be ſpoken of. The *firſt* was the *orderly* and *regular diviſion* of the world among all the children of Noah*; the *ſecond* was the *diſorderly* and *miraculous diſperſion* of the Cuthites, *poſterior* to their having violated the primitive arrangement, by invading the territories of Aſhur†. In memory of *the firſt* of theſe events, Peleg received his deſcriptive appellation; whence it will follow, that *the ſecond* certainly took place *after* the birth of that patriarch, but how long after, is difficult to determine. The general opinion ſeems always to have been, and indeed Scripture apparently intimates it‡, that Nimrod was principally concerned in the building of the tower §. Nimrod however was the grandſon of Ham, and, from the peculiar manner in which he is mentioned ‖, he appears to have been the youngeſt of the ſons of Cuſh; whence perhaps we may be allowed to conjecture, that he was born about 120 years after the deluge: and, ſince the great influence, which he poſſeſſed over his followers, could ſcarcely have been acquired in his youth, and during the lives of his elder brothers, we may alſo infer, that he muſt have been nearly 250 years old, before he attempted to build the tower, and found the empire of Babel. If this mode of computation be allowable, every chronological difficulty will be removed: for Noah will then have died previous to the events of Shinar, and the world will have become ſufficiently populous to remove all doubts reſpecting the poſſibility of ſuch events. This computation moreover will perfectly accord, in point of time, with the ancient tradition ¶, that Abraham was caſt into a furnace by Nimrod, for refuſing to worſhip his grand deity Fire §§.

* See Gen. x. † See Gen. xi. ‡ Gen. x. 10; and xi. 9.
§ Syncel. Chronog. p. 42. Cedren. Hiſt. Compend, p. 11.
‖ Gen. x. 7, 8. ¶ Fabric. Codex Pſeudepig. vol. 1. p. 344.
§§ The preceding calculation however is offered with great diffidence, continues the ſame excellent author; for I am aware that it is liable to ſome objections. If therefore it ſhould be maintained, that the birth of Peleg and the

As children of the ſame pious parents, living together, and favoured with the ſame inſtructions and examples, differ frequently, not only in their intellects, but in their diſpoſitions and manners; as was the caſe with Seth and Cain, the children of Adam; ſo it appears that Shem was the moſt pious of the ſons of Noah: and, as he lived for five hundred years after the deluge, no doubt, he earneſtly and faithfully inculcated the true worſhip of God among his offspring; therefore, his poſterity retained it in its purity for ſeveral generations: until, at length, even ſome of theſe, by intermingling with a part of the race of Ham, (ſettled in the land of Shinar, among whom idolatry ſeems firſt to have originated,) degenerated ſo far as to adopt their idolatrous practices.

The longevity of the antediluvians was of very conſiderable uſe, as the medium by which information was given of the creation, the origin of evil, and the promiſe of the Meſſiah. From the beginning to the deſtruction of the old world was 1656 years. Noah was 600 years old when the flood came: he had converſed with Lamech his father, who had ſeen Adam and his children, (being 56 years of age when Adam expired;) and with Methuſalem his grandfather, who died the year before the deluge, and who, being 343 years old at Adam's death, without doubt, inſtructed Noah, during ſo vaſt an interval, as himſelf had been inſtructed by Adam. Methuſalem having lived long with Seth, who died in the year of the world 1042, it is evident that Noah, who was born in 1056, had not only ſeen Lamech and Methuſalem, but many alſo of their anceſtors, whoſe diſcourſes he heard, examined their traditions, and imitated their mode of worſhip*.

building of the tower were contemporary, inſtead of ſucceſſive events, the adoption of the Samaritan chronology, which places the birth of Peleg 401 years after the deluge, would, equally with the foregoing hypotheſis, allow a ſufficient period of time for the repeopling of the earth: but, whether it be allowable to ſet aſide the Hebrew computation in favour of the Samaritan, I leave to abler judges than myſelf to determine.

Faber's Diſſertation, vol. 1. *p.* 11—13.

* Allix's Reflections upon Geneſis, chap. 12.

Abraham, the firſt father and patriarch of the Jewiſh nation, was a deſcendant of Shem, and, according to the Hebrew chronology, contemporary with him for 150 years: but, according to that of the Samaritan, might have converſed for a conſiderable time even with Noah himſelf: and conſequently would receive much important inſtruction, from one or both of theſe venerable anceſtors. When God appeared to him, probably with ſome viſible diſplay of his glory, he lived at Urr of the Chaldees, which country lay between the rivers Tigris and Euphrates, and was therefore called Meſopotamia. Idolatry had made conſiderable progreſs there, and he himſelf was an idolater; but, on being enlightened in the knowledge of the true God, inſtructed how to ſerve him, and called to leave his country and kindred, he became a remarkable example of faith and obedience: this was ſome hundred years before the giving of the Law, and longer before the Temple was built. And from Shem, through the line of Heber, Abraham, Jacob, and their poſterity, was the knowledge of the living God, and of true religion, handed down to the time of Chriſt and his Apoſtles*.

Previous to entering more fully upon the ſubject of pagan idolatry, we ſhall notice that, when our Saviour came, the Heathen world had made aſtoniſhing progreſs in polite literature, and was at the zenith of its glory. Stars, of great magnitude and brightneſs, had appeared in the ſcientific hemiſphere, engaging the attention, and exciting the wonder of mankind.—Chaldea had boaſted her *Zoroaſter*, to whom the invention of arts among the Chaldeans is generally aſcribed; and from whom, ſeveral perſons, diſtinguiſhed by their learning in other countries, were dignified with the ſame name. Egypt had long been the land of ſcience: whence the Egyptians derived their literary accompliſhments is not certain; ſome ſay from Abraham. Philo, Diodorus Siculus, and others aſſert, that their wiſdom or learning was the mathematics,

* See an excellent Pamphlet, entitled, *An Inquiry into the Origin of true Religion, &c.* By the Rev. James Creighton, B. A.

aſtronomy, geometry, arithmetic, muſic, natural philoſophy, phyſic, hieroglyphics, and civil and political knowledge.

The Grecian ſages, many of whom travelled for information into Egypt, were very diſtinguiſhed characters. *Solon*, by the greatneſs of his parts, raiſed himſelf to the government of his country; and his literary productions, it is ſaid, embraced a variety of ſubjects, as laws, eloquence, elegies, iambic verſe; and he either inſtituted or improved the Areopagus at Athens.—*Pythagoras*, who preferred the title of *Lover of Wiſdom* to that of *Sage*, was one of the greateſt philoſophers of antiquity. In his travels, acquainting himſelf with the writings of Moſes, and the diſcipline of the Jews, he, from theſe, transfuſed many things into the opinions and regulations of his own ſect; which produced legiſlators, geometricians, aſtronomers, naturaliſts, and celebrated men in every claſs. If we meaſure the greatneſs of a philoſopher, by the duration of his doctrine and the extent of its propagation, Pythagoras will appear with diſtinguiſhed excellence, ſince many of his opinions are, at this day, literally followed in ſeveral parts of the world.—*Socrates* (who lived at a time when the human mind ſeemed every day to diſcover new ſources of knowledge,) had an extenſive capacity, and a penetrating mind; and was eager to obtain inſtruction. The examination of nature, the ſtudy of the ſciences, and an application to uſeful arts, by turns engaged his attention; until he became one of the greateſt philoſophers.—*Plato*, who had examined the Jewiſh inſtitutes, and brought into Greece what he had found in the writings of Moſes, was ſo illuſtrious, that the ancients thought more highly of him than of all their philoſophers, and always prefixed to his name the epithet *divine*. Tully perfectly adored him; ſaid, he was juſtly called by Panetius, the divine, the moſt ſacred, the Homer of philoſophers; entitled him to Atticus, Deus ille noſter, he is our God; thought, that if Jupiter had ſpoken Greek, he would have ſpoken in Plato's language;—and made him ſo implicitly his guide in wiſdom and philoſophy,

as to declare, that he would rather err with Plato, than be right with any other.

The Grecian commonwealth, says Harris, while they maintained their liberty, were the most heroic confederacy that ever existed. They were the politest, the bravest, and the wisest of men. In the short space of little more than a century, they became such statesmen, warriors, orators, historians, physicians, poets, critics, painters, sculptors, architects, and (last of all) philosophers, as almost compels us to consider *that golden period*, as a providential event, in honour of human nature, to shew to what perfection the species might ascend*.

Two of the four very happy ages for learned men, as mentioned by Dr. Blair, are, first, the *Grecian*, which commenced near the time of the Peloponnesian war, and extended to the time of Alexander the Great, within which period we have Aristotle, Anacreon, Apelles, Aristophanes, Æschylus, Demosthenes, Herodotus, Euripides, Isocrates, Lysias, Pindar, Plato, Phidias, Praxiteles, Menander, Socrates, Sophocles, Æschines, Theocrites, Thucidides, and Xenophon. The second is the *Roman*, included nearly within the days of Julius and Augustus Cæsar; affording us Catullus, Cæsar, Cicero, Horace, Livy, Lucretius, Ovid, Phædrus, Propertius, Terence, Tibullus, Sallust, Varro, Virgil, and Vitruvius.

Homer, the most ancient of the Greek poets†, was the father of poetry, as Herodotus was of history, and Hypocrates of physic. His works were very highly esteemed by Lycurgus, Solon, and the kings and princes of Greece. Lawgivers, the founders of monarchies and commonwealths, it is said, took from them the models of their politics, and learned the art of governing; and captains availed themselves of the same, to form battles, encamp armies, besiege towns, fight and

* Hermes, fifth edit. p. 416, 417.

† Homer flourished, according to Dr. Blair, about 900 years before Christ; according to Dr. Priestley 850; according to the Arundelian marbles 300 after the taking of Troy; and agreeably to them all, above 400 before Plato and Aristotle. Seven cities disputed the glory of having given him birth.

gain victories. He travelled into Egypt; from whence he brought into Greece the names of their gods, the chief ceremonies of their worſhip, and a more improved knowledge in the arts than had prevailed in his own country. The only inconteſtible works which he has left behind him are the *Iliad* and the *Odyſſey*.—*Virgil*, the moſt excellent of all the ancient Roman poets, has left the world ten *Eclogues* or *Bucolics*, four books of *Georgics*, and the *Æneid* in twelve books. Of theſe two diſtinguiſhed poets, Homer (as ſays Sir William Temple) was, without doubt, the moſt univerſal genius that has been known in the world, and Virgil the moſt accompliſhed. To the former muſt be allowed the moſt fertile invention, the richeſt vein, the moſt general knowledge, and the moſt lively expreſſions: to the latter, the nobleſt ideas, the juſteſt inſtitution, the wiſeſt conduct, and the choiceſt elocution.—*Horace* was the moſt excellent of the Latin poets, of the lyric and ſatyrical kind, and the moſt judicious critic in the reign of Auguſtus. His talents ſoon made him known to the Emperor and Mæcenas, who, having a particular eſteem for him, loaded him with favours. He alſo contracted a ſtrict friendſhip with Agrippa, Pollio, Virgil, and all the other great men of his time. His *Odes*, *Epiſtles*, *Satires*, and *Art of Poetry*, are ſtill extant. That Homer, Virgil, and Horace, were men of extraordinary abilities, their works, which have been handed down to us, abundantly ſhew; and theſe the mere Engliſh ſcholar may read in the tranſlations, by Pope, Dryden, Francis, &c.

But while the Heathen world made ſuch progreſs in other ſciences, and the polite arts, there was none made in theology: not becauſe the philoſophers and poets neglected to cultivate this ſcience; for there was not a ſubject they thought of, nor diſcourſed about, more than the exiſtence and nature of the gods: neither was it for want of natural abilities, nor of learning, as has already appeared; for, the greateſt wits, and the brighteſt conſtellation of geniuſes that ever illuminated the republic of letters, were devoted to the inveſtigation of the principles and cauſes of things. And ſurely this

affords a ſtrong preſumption, that religious truth is not congenial with the nature of man; for, otherwiſe, his progreſs in it would have equalled his other acquirements*.

Human learning and divine knowledge are diſtinct; and however juſt the claim of the Heathen to polite literature was, yet, in point of religion, they debaſed their powers, and were groſly ignorant. It is eaſy to harangue on the excellency and advantage of the light of nature. It is agreeable to the pride of mankind, to exalt reaſon, and pronounce it a ſufficient guide in religion, and to eternal happineſs. But, from the records of antiquity, which exhibit the experience of mankind in all ages, we learn that thoſe, who followed no other inſtructor, have wandered in uncertainty, darkneſs, and error: the truth of which is demonſtrable, from the exiſtence, extent, and duration of pagan idolatry; to which, we ſhall now turn our attention.

It is certain that idolatry was in the world ſoon after the flood: but ſome attribute its origin even to the antediluvians. In the days of Enos the ſon of Seth, ſays Maimonides†, men fell into grievous errors, and even Enos himſelf partook of their infatuation. Their language was, that *ſince God had placed on high the heavenly bodies, and uſed them as his miniſters, it was evidently his will, that they ſhould receive from men the ſame veneration, as the ſervants of a great prince juſtly claim from the ſubject multitude.* Impreſſed with this notion, they began to build temples to the Stars, to ſacrifice to them, and to worſhip them, in the vain expectation, that they would thus pleaſe the Creator of all things. At firſt indeed, they did not ſuppoſe the Stars to be the only deities, but adored, in conjunction with them, the Lord God omnipotent. In proceſs of

* Lectures, ſuppoſed to have been delivered, by the author of a View of the internal Evidence of the Chriſtian Religion, to a ſelect party of friends: dedicated to Edward Gibbon, Eſq.

† Maimonides was a celebrated rabbi, called by the Jews *the eagle of the doctors.* He was born of an illuſtrious family at Cordova in Spain, 1131; ſettled in Egypt, where he ſpent his life as phyſician to the ſultan; opened a ſchool, which was ſoon filled with pupils from Alexandria, Damaſcus, &c. who ſpread his fame all over the world: he died aged ſeventy, and was buried in Upper-Galilee.

time however that great and venerable name was forgotten; and the whole human race retained no other religion, than the idolatrous worſhip of the hoſt of heaven.

They might alſo imagine, that God, the firſt, all-perfect Being, and Governor of the world, did impart, to beings of a different nature, powers to influence men's happineſs; and, upon that account, they terminated their worſhip in the Sun, Moon, and Stars. We may ſuppoſe them to have argued thus: *We can take notice of the profuſion of the divine goodneſs, of that munificence which he hath expreſt to his creatures; and why may we not take notice of the inſtruments, why not worſhip the Sun, to expreſs the regard which we have to that luminary, which imparts to us what is neceſſary for our ſubſiſtence and comfort?* Undoubtedly this reaſoning was extremely wrong, becauſe all the material beings that conſpired to make them live comfortably, did not give thoſe benefits by choice. The heavenly bodies being directed in their rotations by the infinite wiſdom, and ſuſtained and continued in their proper orbits, by the almighty power of the Firſt Cauſe; had the Heathen attended to the voice of reaſon, they would not have ſet up idol-gods in oppoſition to, nor in conjunction with, the one true God, but would have ſeen it right to have acknowledged his unity, and to have offered worſhip to him alone

With this antediluvian ſuperſtition the patriarch Ham ſeems to have been tainted, (ſays Faber,) and to have conveyed the knowledge of it to his own particular deſcendants. Although he had been mercifully preſerved in the ark, along with the other members of his family, yet his ſubſequent conduct plainly ſhewed, that he was not only ignorant of the ſanctifying influence of pure religion, but that he was a ſtranger to the laws even of common decency. The leaven of the ancient idolatry lay ſecretly working in the boſoms of his poſterity, during the ſpace of near four hundred years; but was prevented from openly ſhewing itſelf by the dread of Noah, who was ſtill living. At length that venerable patriarch was removed by the hand of death;

and the mighty hunter of men, the tyrannical Nimrod, rose, like a baleful comet, above the political horizon. He was the grandson of Ham, and the son of Cush; and appears to have been the first avowed postdiluvian apostate. The very name indeed of *Nimrod*, which apparently signifies *a rebellious panther*, points out the nature of his offence; namely, his arbitrary conduct in unjustly seizing the dominions of Ashur, in the land of Shinar; and we are justified in concluding, that idolatry was openly established at his metropolis Babylon.

The insertion of a conjecture here, may serve to elucidate the establishment of the first postdiluvian idolatry. Considering the dreadful catastrophe of the deluge, and that the recollection of it could not have been very soon erased from the minds of the Noachidæ, it is natural to suppose, that the anniversary either of its commencement, or of its termination, would be regularly observed by a solemn religious festival.—Such a commemoration, in its primitive simplicity, would doubtless be not only innocent, but even serviceable to the cause of piety and morality; but, at the same time, it would be liable to gross abuse, which in the result proved unhappily the case: for, it is probable, that, previous to the building of the tower, they had begun to entertain too great a veneration for their arkite ancestors. This veneration was by the degenerate Nimrod soon perverted into gross idolatry, and blended with the antediluvian worship of the host of heaven. Noah and the Sun were henceforth regarded as one divine object; and the Ark, in which he was preserved, was profanely reverenced in conjunction with the Moon.

It is not improbable, that the worship of the Moon and the Ark, conjointly, might have originated with the Chaldean astronomers, who, having observed the resemblance of a crescent to a boat, thought that the waxing Moon was no unfit symbol of the Ark: and hence we find, that the very same goddess was sometimes a personification of the one, and sometimes of the other. Varro accordingly asserts, that the Moon,

when in the form of a creſcent, was called *Jana* *; but Janus is the ſcriptural Noah, conſequently Jana is the Noetic ark or creſcent.

Noah however was not the only patriarch worſhipped along with the Sun; in ſubſequent ages Ham not unfrequently obtained this honour. I may here therefore, with propriety, notice a ſingular ſort of confuſion, which we find very generally to pervade the mythology of the heathen. Noah and his triple offſpring are continually repreſented to us under the characters of an ancient deity and his three ſons; and yet every one of theſe three ſons is, upon various occaſions, confounded with his father. Thus Saturn, Jupiter, Neptune, and Pluto, taken conjointly, are evidently Noah, Ham, Japhet, and Shem; nevertheleſs, Saturn, Jupiter, and Pluto, when conſidered ſeparately, are all equally the ſolar Noah, while Neptune very frequently ſeems to be the ſame patriarch, adored as a diluvian god. This remark will equally apply to the *Cronus* of Sanconiatho, and his three ſons, Cronus the younger, Jupiter-Belus, and Apollo; to the *Brahmè* of Hindoſtan, and his children Brahma, Viſhnou, and Seeva; and to the *Bore* of Scandinavia, and his triple offspring Odin, Vile, and Ve.

This I apprehend to be the only key, that can unlock the hidden meaning of the myſterious polytheiſm of the ancients. Oſiris, Bacchus, Cronus, Pluto, Adonis, and Hercules, taken in one point of view, are all equally the Sun; but, if we examine their reſpective hiſtories, and attentively conſider the actions, which are aſcribed to them, we ſhall be convinced, that, in their human capacity, they can be no other than the great patriarch. In a ſimilar manner, the various goddeſſes of paganiſm ſeem to be all one and the ſame mythological character; though they ſometimes repreſent the Moon, ſometimes the Ark, and ſometimes the globe of the Earth emerging from the waters of the deluge†.

From this union of the two primitive ſuperſtitions originated the cuſtom of beſtowing the names of the

* Varr. de Re Ruſt. lib. 1. c. 37.

† Juno and Minerva are perhaps the only exceptions to this rule.

hero-gods upon the celeſtial bodies. As the early poſt-diluvians, unawed by the recent judgment of God, ſoon converted the pious remembrance of their anceſtors into a blind ſuperſtition; and as the idolatrous veneration of the Sun, the Moon, and the Stars was ere long ſuperadded; ſo theſe luminaries were eſteemed fit reſidences for their deified progenitors; and, from thoſe lofty ſtations, they were thought to overlook and direct the affairs of this ſublunary world. Modern aſtronomy ſtill continues to retain the ſame titles; and Nimrod himſelf,-the founder of this compound idolatry, holds a conſpicuous place in the ſphere, and is repreſented as overlooking the affairs of mortals from the brilliant conſtellation of Orion. The ſervile flattery of more recent times tranſlated the deified ſpirit of the firſt Cæſar into the Julium Sidus; and Herſchell, the great aſtronomer of the preſent day, adopting the claſſical compliment without the claſſical impiety, has given the appellation of *the Georgium Sidus* to his newly diſcovered planet.

Notwithſtanding I have thus given the conjectures of Faber, yet it is generally allowed that the deities of all nations were either ancient heroes, renowned for noble exploits, or kings and generals who had founded empires, or women, become illuſtrious by remarkable actions or uſeful inventions. The merit of theſe eminent perſons, contemplated by their poſterity with an enthuſiaſtic gratitude, was the reaſon of their being exalted to theſe celeſtial honours. And as the Sun, Moon, and Stars ſhine forth with a luſtre ſuperior to that of all other material beings, they particularly attracted the attention of mankind, and received religious homage from almoſt all nations. From theſe beings of a nobler kind, idolatry deſcended into an enormous multiplication of inferior powers; ſo that, in many countries, mountains, trees, and rivers, the earth, the ſea, and the winds, nay, even virtues, vices, and diſeaſes had their ſhrines attended by zealous worſhippers.

Though the Sun, the Moon, and the Stars became the principal objects of religious worſhip, yet the moſt prevalent opinion was, that the Sun was the one ſu

preme god. It is true, that ſome of the philoſophers believed in the exiſtence of the Almighty, yet they thought he had withdrawn himſelf from mortals, as being of too ſublime a nature to be known by them; and that he had deputed the hoſt of heaven to inſpect the world, as the only gods to be enjoyed by men: of this opinion were the followers of Epicurus. Optimus maximus Cælus Eternus, was an old inſcription found at Rome, and intimates, that the heavens were dignified with thoſe epithets which are peculiar to the true God. Plato mentions, how devout Socrates was in worſhipping the Sun, and that ſeveral times he fell into an ecſtaſy while thus employed. Jupiter was conſidered as the father of the gods*, and, as Homer repeatedly ſhews, was acknowledged to have them at his nod: but they were ſuppoſed to have a ſhare in this ſovereignty. Though he preſided in all affairs, yet Neptune governed the ſea, Ceres the land; and, beſide this, every country had its peculiar guardian god, according to the notion and choice of the people: and they offered worſhip to them all, which was in fact honouring them without diſtinction. Among this multiplicity of gods, they loſt ſight of the eternal Deity, from whoſe hands they had received their exiſtence; and, while ſurrounded with the cleareſt demonſtrations of his power and goodneſs, were blind to his infinite perfections.

Before the uſe of letters, the firſt method of conveying knowledge among the Egyptians was chiefly by hieroglyphics, enigmas, ſymbols, and allegories. Hieroglyphics were the figures of various animals, the parts of human bodies, and mechanical inſtruments; intended as proper emblems or ſigns of divine, ſacred, or ſupernatural things; and almoſt uniformly maintained to be an invention of the prieſts, to conceal their wiſdom from the knowledge of the vulgar: it was a cuſtom to have the walls, doors, &c. of their

* The great goddeſs Diana, it is ſaid, was his daughter, by Ceres; Apollo was his ſon, by Latona; Minerva ſprang out of his brain, completely armed and fully grown; and indeed moſt of the other gods lineally deſcended from him.

temples, obelisks*, &c. engraven with such figures. These were distinguished from common symbols, which were signs of sensible and natural things. Allegory and personification were peculiarly agreeable to the genius of antiquity; and the simplicity of truth was perpetually sacrificed at the shrine of poetical decoration. I have mentioned this method of instruction, to introduce the opinion of a distinguished character upon a point of some importance. Sir John Marsham thinks, that symbols were the origin of animal worship in Egypt†: because by these was recorded the history of their greater deities, their kings, and lawgivers, being represented by animals and other creatures. The symbol of each god was well known, and familiar to his worshippers, by means of the popular paintings and engravings on their temples and other sacred monuments; so that the symbol presenting an idea of the god, and that idea exciting sentiments of religion, it was natural for them, in their addresses to any particular god, to turn to his representative mark or symbol; especially when we consider, that the Egyptian priests feigned a divine original for hieroglyphic characters, in order to increase the veneration of the people for them. These would, of course, bring on a relative devotion to these symbolic figures, which, when it came to be paid to the living animal, would soon terminate in an ultimate worship.

Egypt and the East were the sources, from which, in a great measure, the Greeks equally derived their origin, and their mythology‡. Diodorus Siculus in-

* Some of these have remained to modern times. The first objects which attract the attention, on visiting the palace of Luxor, a village near the ancient city of Thebes in Upper Egypt, are two obelisks of a single block: they are placed in the front of a mole at the distance of about fourteen paces.

† Can. Chron. p. 58.

‡ At the time the Israelites were in Egypt, Idolatry was very prevalent in that country. While they served the Egyptians, they learned to serve their gods also: for a sufficient proof of this, see *Josh.* xxiv. 14, and *Ezek.* xxiii. 3, 8. From their coming out of Egypt to the time of the Babylonian captivity they had a strong propensity to Idolatry; and though they lived on miracles during the forty years they were in the wilderness,—on bread rained down from heaven every day, except the seventh or the sabbath; on water brought miraculously out of rocks; their clothes waxed not old, nor did their feet swell; notwithstanding their travels; a cloudy pillar constantly attended them, and guided their motions, —it overshadowed them in the day, and screened them from the scorching rays

forms us, that the Samothracians had a peculiar dialect of their own, which prevailed in their ſacred rites*; and Jamblichus plainly declares, that the language, uſed in the myſteries, was not that of Greece, but of Egypt and Aſſyria. Accordingly, he highly cenſures the folly of thoſe, who imagined that barbarous words poſſeſſed no inherent ſignification; and tells us, that the language of the Myſteries was that uſed by the gods, conſequently the moſt ancient language which was ſpoken upon earth†. Hence we may learn the meaning of that conſtant and curious diſtinction, made by Homer, between the dialect of the gods, and the dialect of men: that of the former was Chaldee or Hebrew; while this of the latter was the more modern dialect of Greece. But the faſtidious delicacy of claſſical ears, and the vain affectation of remote antiquity, induced the Greeks to corrupt various oriental words, and to ſeek for the radicals of them in their own language. This is confirmed by an expreſſion which dropped from Plato, intimating, What we Greeks receive from the Barbarians, we put into a better dreſs‡. This Greek dreſs always ſerved to diſguiſe from whence they received their knowledge. Their being ignorant of the eaſtern idiom, occaſioned them frequently to miſtake the meaning of words, taking them in a literal, when they were chiefly to be underſtood in a figurative ſenſe. They alſo changed or tranſpoſed ſome letter or letters, to render the pronunciation ſmoother in their own language. They often miſtook the place of worſhip for the god worſhipped: and formed perſons out of the titles of deities, or the names of temples and towers: and then invented hiſtories to

of the ſun; and, in the night, illuminated their path: yet, after all theſe peculiar mercies, they were careleſs of God's inſtituted worſhip, and omitted both Sacrifice and the Paſſover. When Moſes was abſent from them on the Mount, with God, for near forty days, they impiouſly called for made gods, to be viſible repreſentations of the true God, and ſigns of his preſence with them. Nay, they even made a calf, in imitation of the Egyptian Apis, which was the figure of an Ox, and offered ſacrifices to the idol. The matter of Baalpeor proved fatal to many thouſands of them; See *Num.* xxv. 3, 4, 5; *Deut.* iv. 3; *Pſa.* cvi. 28; *Hoſ.* ix. 10. And the ſame diſpoſition for idolatry appeared when they were ſettled in Canaan.

* Diod. Bibl. liv. 5. p. 322. † Jamb. de Myſt. 7. cap. 4. ‡ Epinomis.

ſupport what they had done. Having a high opinion of their own antiquity, they wiſhed to inſinuate that every ancient tradition proceeded from themſelves; and therefore attributed to their anceſtors the merit of great exploits, and the honour of founding cities, where even the name of Greece had not been known*. It is confeſſed by Serranus† that Plato ſpoke many things, which he did not underſtand, drawn from the Phœnician or Syrian theology.

The hieroglyphics, though intended to convey excellent inſtructions, were miſtaken, or but imperfectly underſtood by the Greeks; who tranſplanted them into their native land, without making a full inveſtigation; and then added their own fictions, or explications of them; nay, ſome think that, at length, they metamorphoſed them into ſo many gods. It is evident that they multiplied gods almoſt ad infinitum. The polite and learned Greeks had about thirty thouſand gods; and the enlightened Romans almoſt beyond enumeration.

The druidical worſhip among the ancient Gauls, Britons, and Germans ſeems to have been much like that of other nations. Diogenes Laertius aſſures us, that the druids were the ſame among the ancient Britons as the philoſophers among the Greeks; the magi among the Perſians; the gymnoſophiſts among the Indians; and the Chaldeans among the Aſſyrians. In this remote iſland, they worſhipped the Sun, under the various names of Bel, Belinus, &c. which names, in their language, were expreſſive of the nature and properties of that orb. They venerated the myſtic circle, that ſignificant emblem of the Sun; and to this object of idolatrous worſhip, thoſe circles of ſtones, ſome of which are ſtill remaining, ſeem to have been chiefly dedicated: where the druids kept the ſacred fire, the ſymbol of this divinity, and from whence, as being ſituated upon eminences, they had an extenſive view of the heavens. In this ſhape their maſſy

* Creighton's Inquiry, &c.

† Serranus was a learned French hiſtorical and theological writer, and died A.D. 1598. The work for which he is moſt known out of France, is his Latin Verſion of Plato.

temples were univerſally built; and their ſacred dances, in honour of the ſolar deity, performed. They ſeem to have worſhipped the Moon equally with the Sun; and it has been obſerved, that the circular temples dedicated to theſe luminaries were of the ſame conſtruction, and uſually contiguous. They had a great number of other gods, even, according to Gildas, more than the Egyptians; and ſome of them had been illuſtrious men, perhaps ſeveral of their deified anceſtors, and a few others, the ſame deified mortals that were worſhipped by the Greeks and Romans. They worſhipped alſo ſeveral goddeſſes, as Andraſte, who is ſuppoſed to have been the ſame with Venus or Diana; Onvana, Minerva, Ceres, Proſerpine, &c. Nay, to ſuch an extent did they carry this matter, that there was ſcarcely a river, lake, mountain, or wood, but what was ſuppoſed to have ſome divinities or genii reſiding in it.

The firſt of May was a great annual feſtival, in honour of Belinus, or the Sun. On this day they had prodigious fires in all their ſacred places, and on the tops of their cairns, and many ſacrifices were offered to that luminary, which then began to warm and cheer them. Of this feſtival there are ſtill ſome veſtiges remaining, both in Ireland and in the Highlands of Scotland, where the firſt of May is called Beltein, i. e. the fire of Bel, or Belinus. Midſummer-Day and the firſt of November were likewiſe annual feſtivals; the former to implore the prolific influence of heaven upon their fields, and the latter to return thanks for the favourable ſeaſons and the fruits of the earth; as well as to pay their yearly contributions to their prieſts.

Having left the Fountain of Light and Source of true Bleſſedneſs, the Heathen entertained a variety of ſtrange and contradictory opinions concerning the *Summum Bonum*, the Chief Good, or final happineſs of man. Varro* pretends to enumerate, concerning this, no leſs

* Varro, uſually ſtyled the moſt learned of the Romans, was born in the year of Rome 638, that is, about 28 before Chriſt. In the civil wars, he was zealouſly attached to Pompey; but, after his defeat, ſoon ſubmitted to Cæſar, who was reconciled to him. From thence he applied his whole time to letters, and had the charge of the Greek and Latin libraries at Rome. Several of his works are ſtill extant.

than 288 different opinions. Solon placed it in a competency of worldly goods, acting honeſtly, and living temperately: Ariſtotle—in virtue, health, and outward conveniency; and herein he was followed by his numerous ſchool: Socrates—in knowledge: Pythagoras—in comprehending the perfections of the ſoul: Zeno—in living according to nature; and Cloanthus adds, that according to nature, is according to virtue: Chryſippus—in living according to the expert knowledge of things which happen naturally: and, among the whole of them, not one placed it in the preſent and eternal enjoyment of God. Plato thought the diſcovery of the Chief Good was not eaſy, and if it were found out, it was not ſafe to be declared. By travelling, converſation, and ſtudy, he had acquired ſome confuſed notions of it; yet he did not underſtand the ſubject ſufficiently to be able to explain it to others*. How ſtrange, ſays a late author, that they who were giants in all other kinds of literature, ſhould prove ſuch dwarfs in divinity, as to be excelled by thoſe Chriſtians who are acquainted with only the firſt principles of their religion†.

The Heathen were equally at a loſs how to worſhip God: the duty of prayer, in particular, ſo ſtrongly recommended and urged in the Scripture, they knew not how to perform. Alcibiades, when going to the temple to pray, met Socrates, who diſſuaded him, by proving his inability to perform it, of which he was at length convinced. Whereupon Socrates concluded: "You ſee, that it is not at all ſafe for you to go and pray in the temple—I am therefore of opinion, it is much better for you to be ſilent.—And it is neceſſary you ſhould wait for ſome perſon to teach you how you ought to behave yourſelf, both towards the gods and men." To which Alcibiades ſaid, "And when will that time come, Socrates? and who is he that will inſtruct me? with what pleaſure ſhould I look on him?" To which he replied, "He will do it who takes a true

* See Stanley's Lives, for more information upon this ſubject.

† Wolſeley's Reaſonableneſs of Scripture Belief.

care of you. But methinks, as we read in Homer, that as Minerva diſſipated the miſt that covered Diomedes, and hindered him from diſtinguiſhing God and man; ſo it is neceſſary, that he ſhould, in the firſt place, ſcatter the darkneſs that covers your ſoul, and afterwards give you theſe remedies that are neceſſary to put you in a condition of diſcerning good and evil; for at preſent you know not how to make a difference." Alcibiades anſwered, "I think I muſt defer my ſacrifice to that time*." Socrates, approving, ſaid, "It is more ſafe ſo to do, than to run ſo great a riſk." Epictetus was ſo much of the ſame mind, that he knew no way but to adviſe every one to follow the cuſtom of his country in worſhip†. Upon the ſame account, Seneca rejected all worſhip‡. In extraordinary caſes, the Heathen made a kind of revelation the baſis of their worſhip. Plato ſays, that laws, concerning divine matters, muſt be had from the Delphic oracles§, which were accounted among the Heathen, what the prophecies were among the Hebrews.

They had ſome notions of the neceſſity of ſacrifices, for expiating their guilt, and pacifying their gods, when apprehenſive of their diſpleaſure; and it would have been well had they confined themſelves, in their ſacrifices, to ſuch animals, fruits, &c. as they thought would be moſt acceptable; but we have ſufficient proof, that in ſome caſes, the Egyptians, Phœnicians, Carthagenians, Greeks, and Romans, offered human victims. And the druidical creed contained this article, "That nothing but the life of man could atone for the life of man," ſo their altars frequently ſtreamed with human blood. Upon ſome occaſions they formed, of oſier twigs, a huge coloſſal figure of a man, and having filled it with men, and ſurrounded it with hay and other combuſtible materials, they ſet fire to the pile, and reduced the whole to aſhes. For this inhuman purpoſe, indeed, they preferred ſuch individuals as had been guilty of miſdemeanors, as the moſt ſatisfactory to their gods; but when they had no cri-

* See Stanley's Lives, for the ſame account of Socrates and Xenophon, p. 75.
Enchirid. cap. 38. ‡ Epiſ. 95 § De Legibus.

minals, they made no ſcruple of ſupplying their places with innocent perſons. Theſe dreadful ſacrifices were offered by the druids for the public, at the eve of a dangerous war, or in a time of any national calamity; and for particular perſons of high rank, when afflicted with any dangerous diſeaſe.

Though the Heathen entertained the opinion of the neceſſity of purification, yet they arrogantly aſſumed to themſelves the power of effecting it. Alcinous, the Platonic philoſopher, gives the following doctrine of Plato. "Beatitude is a good habit of the genius, and this ſimilitude to God we ſhall obtain, chiefly by reaſon, diſcipline, and inſtitution of wiſdom, withdrawing ourſelves as much as poſſible from human affairs, and being converſant in theſe things only, which are underſtood by contemplation. The way to prepare, and, as it were, cleanſe the demon that is in us, is to initiate ourſelves into higher diſciplines, which is done by muſic, arithmetic, aſtronomy, and geometry, not without ſome reſpect of the body, by gymnaſtic, whereby it is made more ready for the actions both of war and peace*." This is the language of one of the firſt of the philoſophers!—An oracle of wiſdom among the Romans preſumptuouſly ſaid, Whoever thanked God for virtue or wiſdom? Theſe they conſidered as their own acquiſition, the pure reſult of their induſtry. Seneca believed good men to be better than the gods; theſe being ſo by nature, thoſe by their own care and labour. Epictetus aſſerts, that the conſtitution or image of a philoſopher is to expect good, as well as fear evil, only from himſelf†.

Human nature being thus left to itſelf, it is no wonder that the practices of the Heathen were equally corrupt with their principles. Their religion was ſhamefully defective in point of morality. The prieſts, who pretended to ſpeak from the gods, and deliver the oracles of heaven, ſaid little on virtue and a good life. On the other ſide, the philoſophers, who ſpoke from reaſon, made little mention of the Deity in their

* See Stanley's Lives, where Plato's doctrine is copiouſly inſerted, cap. 27.
† Ench. cap. 27.

ethics*. As the moſt extravagant errors were received among the eſtabliſhed articles of their faith, ſo the moſt infamous vices obtained in their practices, and were indulged not only with impunity, but authorized by the ſanction of their laws. They ſtupidly paid divine honours to thoſe who, in their lives, had been the greateſt monſters of luſt and cruelty. The characters of ſome of their gods, as given by their own writers, both Greeks and Latins, were exceedingly immoral; ſufficient to encourage their votaries in the moſt ſhocking enormities. Their poets deſcribed theſe vices, and their prieſts allowed of ſuch deſcriptions. The ſin of drunkenneſs prevailed among them, even in the feaſts of their gods. In that of Bacchus, which was celebrated after gathering in the fruits of the earth, it was eſteemed, not only lawful, but commendable, to indulge in gluttony and drunkenneſs. They thought fornication no crime; nay, it is evident, by what is written of their manners, that part of their religious worſhip, in honour of the infamous Priapus, Venus, and Bacchus, conſiſted in acts of uncleanneſs. The word uſed by St. Peter, and which our tranſlators have rendered *exceſs*†, ſignifies, (ſays a late divine,) a confuſion of the ſexes, or thoſe abominable luſts which, at the time of celebrating ſome of the Heathen feſtivals, they were excited to in a very high degree. We learn from Macrobius, it was a cuſtom for the men to worſhip Venus in women's habits, and women in thoſe of men‡. Self-murder was generally held

* Locke's Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity, p. 168. † 1 Pet. iv. 4.

‡ Plato, even that man ſo wiſe, (ſays the eloquent Maſſillon,) and who, according to St. Auguſtin, had ſo nearly approached to the truth, nevertheleſs aboliſhes the holy inſtitution of marriage; and permitting a brutal confuſion among men, he for ever does away all paternal names and rights, which, even in animals, nature hath ſo evidently reſpected; and gives to the earth men all uncertain of their origin, all coming into the world without parents, as I may ſay; and conſequently without ties, tenderneſs, affection, or humanity; all in a ſituation to become inceſtuous, or parricides, without even knowing it. Others came to announce to men that voluptuouſneſs was the ſovereign good; and, whatever might have been the intention of the firſt author of this ſect, it is certain that his diſciples ſought no other felicity than that of the brutes; the moſt ſhameful debaucheries became philoſophical maxims. Rome, Athens, Corinth, beheld exceſſes, where, it may be ſaid, that man was no longer man. Even this is nothing; the moſt abominable vices were conſecrated there: temples and altars were erected to them: laſciviouſneſs, inceſt, cruelty, treachery, and other ſtill more aban-

lawful; even the famous Cato, thought it a point of honour to take away his own life, which act was unreasonably applauded by most of the Roman authors: Seneca, one of their strictest moralists, commends him for it, and calls it greatness of mind. Revenge was judged to be honourable, and forgiving injuries, a mark of pusillanimity. Aristotle and Cicero speak of revenge as a duty. Profane swearing was common among them; and if not enjoined by their precepts, yet it was recommended by the examples of their best moralists, as Plato, Socrates, and Seneca, in whose writings occur numerous instances of oaths by Jupiter, Hercules, and beasts. Unnatural lust was practised by Aristotle; and Socrates is more than suspected of the same vice: Socratici Cinædi was a proverb in the days of Juvenal. And several of the philosophers connived at lying, theft, and other flagrant crimes. The principles of honour, the restraints of shame, the influence of philosophy, were all too weak, to keep their natural evil propensities within any tolerable bounds. It is hardly possible to read the melancholy description of the principles and manners of the Heathen world, given by St. Paul*, without horror and surprise:—to think, that man, once the beloved of God, and the lord of this lower world, should thus deny his Creator, and bow down to dumb idols; should thus, by lust and intemperance, degrade himself to the level of a beast, which has no understanding; and by pride, malice, and revenge, transform himself into the very image of Satan, who has been a murderer from the beginning†.

Of the human soul, what it really is, and what its destination, they had very erroneous ideas. A few of

doned crimes, were made divinities of: the worship became a public debauch and prostitution; and gods, so criminal, were no longer honoured but by crimes; and the Apostle, who relates them to us, takes care to inform us, that such was not merely the licentiousness of the people, but of sages and philosophers who had erred in the vanity of their own thoughts, and whom God had delivered up to the corruption of their heart.

* Rom. i. 20—ult. *Sermons, translated by Dickson, vol. 3. p. 28, 29.*

† See a Sermon preached in New-Ark, June 12, 1744, at the ordination of Mr. David Brainerd, a Missionary among the Indians upon the borders of New-York, New-Jersey, and Pennsylvania. By E. Pemberton, A. M. Pastor of the Presbyterian Church in the city of New-York.

the ſublimeſt geniuſes of Athens and Rome, when they conſidered the extenſive capacity of the ſoul, and the deep impreſſions of futurity engraven upon it, were led to infer, that it was immortal, and at death would be tranſlated to ſome new and unknown ſtate; and that the righteous would be diſtinguiſhedly rewarded, and the wicked deſervedly puniſhed:---but, after all, this was mere conjecture, and all their arguments very inconcluſive. If this aſſertion be thought too bold, let it be recollected that Cicero, who wiſhed to believe the immortality of the ſoul, and had well ſtudied the opinions of preceding philoſophers, found himſelf at a loſs and full of uncertainty. With all his proofs out of Plato, ſays Locke, with all the arguments his vaſt reading and great parts could furniſh him with for the immortality of the ſoul, he was ſo little ſatisfied, ſo far from being certain, ſo far from any thought that he had, or could prove it, that he over and over again profeſſes his ignorance and doubt of it.--So many ages, ſo many freſh abſurdities upon the immortality and nature of the ſoul, ſays Maſſillon; here it was an aſſemblage of atoms; there, a ſubtile fire; in another place, a minute and penetrating air; in another ſchool a portion of the divinity. Some made it to die with the body; others would have it to have exiſted before the body: ſome again made it to paſs from one body to another; from man to the horſe, from the condition of a reaſonable being to that of animals without reaſon.

And when they deſcribed the nature and ſituation of the inviſible regions of happineſs or miſery, they made the wildeſt gueſſes, and ran into the moſt abſurd and vain imaginations. The Heaven that they contrived for the entertainment of the virtuous, was made up of ſenſual pleaſures, beneath the dignity of human nature, and inconſiſtent with perfect felicity. The Hell that they deſcribed for the puniſhment of the vicious, conſiſted in ridiculous terrors, unworthy the belief of a rational and religious creature. The four infernal rivers, Phlegethon, Cocytus, Styx, and Acheron; Charon, the ſtern Stygian ferryman; Pluto, Cerberus, the Furies, &c.; Minos, Rhadamanthus, and Æacus, the judges;

Tartarus, with the Giants, Titans, &c.; the paſſage from Tartarus to the Elyſian Fields; the river Lethè, &c.; all are things well known in the ſchools.

The reſurrection of the body from the dead, they viewed as the greateſt abſurdity, and treated with the moſt decided contempt. Tertullian informs us, it was denied by every ſect of the Heathen philoſophers. When St. Paul ſpake of it at Athens, the Epicurean philoſophers mocked*: and, in his defence before Agrippa, it was thought a thing incredible that God ſhould raiſe the dead†. Auguſtin ſays, there was nothing in the whole Chriſtian religion ſo vehemently oppoſed by them, as the reſurrection of the dead. Pliny, in his natural hiſtory, places it among the number of impoſſibilities, and goes ſo far as to ſay, it is what God neither will nor can do. Celſus calls it a deteſtable and abominable doctrine, and inſults the Chriſtians, as mad men, for believing it. And Origen ſays, in his day, it was the common ſubject of laughter and deriſion among the Pagans. The Heathen, as frequently deſcribed by the Apoſtle, had no faith nor hope of the reſurrection of the dead‡.

At the birth of Chriſt, the Epicureans and Academics, were the moſt numerous of the Grecian ſects of Philoſophy, (which was adopted alſo by the Romans;) and, though they ſtruck at the foundations of all religion, were particularly encouraged by the liberality of the rich, and the protection of thoſe in power. The former maintained, "That the world aroſe from chance; that the gods (whoſe exiſtence they did not dare to deny) neither did, nor could extend their care to human affairs; that the ſoul was mortal: that *pleaſure* was to be regarded as the ultimate end of man; and that *virtue* was neither worthy of eſteem nor choice." The latter aſſerted the impoſſibility of arriving at truth, and held it uncertain, "Whether the gods exiſted or not; whether the ſoul was mortal or immortal; whether virtue was preferable to vice, or vice to virtue." Hence we ſee, that mankind, in this period of darkneſs and moral depravity, ſtood highly in need of ſome divine

* Acts xvii. 32. † Acts xxvi. 1. ‡ Eph. ii. 12. 1 Theſſ. iv. 13.

teacher, to convey to the mind *true and certain principles* of religion and morality.

This view of the Heathen fully confirms the declaration of St. Paul concerning them, that *when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became* VAIN *in their imaginations, and their fooliſh heart was* DARKENED. *Profeſſing themſelves* WISE, *they became* FOOLS, *and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beaſts, and creeping things.*—And the Pſalmiſt, exulting in Jehovah, ſays of the Heathen, *their idols were ſilver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they ſpeak not: eyes have they, but they ſee not: they have ears, but they hear not: noſes have they, but they ſmell not: they have hands, but they handle not; feet have they, but they walk not: neither ſpeak they through their throat. They that make them are like unto them; ſo is every one that truſteth in them.*

We ſhall conclude our remarks on the Heathen, in the language of Maſſillon. O God! in permitting human reaſon to fall into ſuch horrible errors, thou intended to let men know, that reaſon, when delivered up to its own darkneſs, is capable of every thing, and that it can never take upon itſelf to be its own guide, without plunging into abyſſes from which thy law and thy light are alone capable of withdrawing him. O faith! O gift of God! O divine torch, which comes to clear up darkneſs, how neceſſary art thou to man! O infallible rule, ſent from heaven, and given in truſt to the church of Jeſus Chriſt, always the ſame in all ages, always independent of places, of times, of nations, and of intereſts, how requiſite it is that thou ſerved as a check upon the eternal fluctuations of the human mind.

Of the Progress of the Christian Religion, from its first Promulgation at Jerusalem, to its legal Establishment under Constantine, the Roman Emperor.

Go, Heathen Sages, strength of Greece and Rome,
Go, hide your glories in oblivion's cave;
While Men of higher, Apostolic fame,
But humble mien, shine forth with brighter ray.—
MESSIAH comes! his pow'r displays;—when, lo!
Philosophy, the pride of Reason, falls;
Idolatry, unmask'd by Truth, is prov'd
An Imposition aided, from beneath;
And Delphic Oracles are heard no more.
Moses, by *Jesse*'s SON is now eclips'd,
Whom Jewish Priests acknowledge as their God.
The SAVIOUR's Empire rises, grows, prevails,
And Kings embrace and glory in the Cross.

THE state of the world, when our Saviour came in the flesh, evinced the absolute necessity of a radical and general change. He came to introduce a superior dispensation of grace, and to establish a religion simple in its nature, powerful in its operation, and beneficial in its effects. The coming of the Messiah, and the erection, extent, and glory of his kingdom, had long been foretold by the holy prophets; anticipated, and anxiously expected by righteous persons.

The scheme of Prophecy, says professor White, considered in its first opening, its gradual advance, and its final and full completion in the advent, the ministry, the death, and resurrection of the Messiah, and the extensive progress of his gospel among the Gentiles, together with its blessed influence on individuals, societies, countries, and the whole race of mankind; is an object the greatest and most sublime that imagination can conceive; and the most pleasing and important that the human mind can contemplate.

We behold the promise of a Redeemer given to our first parents immediately after the fall, in obscure and general terms. It foretold a victory that would be gained over the enemy that had deceived and conquer-

ed them; a victory the moſt illuſtrious in its effects and conſequences; and which ſhould amply revenge on the *ſerpent's head* the evils and miſeries which he had introduced into the world.

We behold the promiſe renewed in ſomewhat clearer language to the Patriarchs; particularly to Abraham, the great father of the faithful. Here the great purpoſes of providence begin to diſcloſe themſelves with a fuller and brighter luſtre at every ſtep. With this venerable patriarch the Almighty condeſcended to enter into a peculiar covenant; and, to excite his obedience, he promiſed to raiſe up from him a great nation; to take him and his family under his immediate patronage; and to make all the nations of the earth bleſſed through him*.

Hence he was diſtinguiſhed by the enjoyment of both temporal and ſpiritual bleſſings. He poſſeſſed cattle, ſilver, and gold, in abundance. His honour and dignity, the children of Heth, among whom he ſojourned, acknowledged, ſaying, *thou art a mighty prince, a prince of God,* (ſo the Hebrew reads,) i. e. a very great and renowned prince. He was favoured with the light of God's reconciled countenance, and with direct proofs of his approbation. Canaan was promiſed to him as a type of Heaven; and he looked for a city which hath foundations, whoſe builder and maker is God. In ſhort, he became an eminent pattern of faith, obedience, ſelf-denial, ſubmiſſion, and holineſs.

His poſterity were multiplied, until he became the father of a great nation. When Jacob went down into Egypt, they were only ſeventy, or at the moſt ſeventy-five perſons, as Stephen reckons them†, after another mode of computation. They ſojourned there‡ accord-

* Gen. xxii. 17, 18.—xxvi. 4. See White's Bampton Lecture, Sermon vii. p. 307, 308; in which is given a fine view of the prophecies, which concern human redemption.

† Acts vii.

‡ Moſes ſays, that the ſojourning of the children of Iſrael, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years: but he means, from the time of Abraham's being firſt called from Ur of the Chaldees, to the giving of the Law at Sinai. The firſt promiſe that was made to Abraham was when he was ſeventy-five years old, (*Gen*, xii. 3, 4;) and from this date, to the birth of Iſaac, which happened when Abraham was one hundred years old, (*Gen*. xxi. 5.) was twenty-

ing to the LXX, 215 years; during a part of which time, the Egyptians endeavoured, by cruel means, to diminish them. Yet, when they came out of Egypt, they were increased to the number of *sixteen hundred thousand men that were fit for war;* besides women and children, and such young men as were under twenty years of age, and old men who were totally unfit to bear arms*. When they were numbered, a little more than a year after they came out of Egypt, the men fit for war were, *six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty*†. We may conclude, that the women and children under twenty years, and the old men, were as many, and half as many, as those who were numbered. So it may be rationally supposed, that the number, in all, could not be less than fifteen hundred thousand: a prodigious increase from seventy persons, in the space of 215 years!

His posterity possessed the gates of their enemies, in the victories that God gave them over the Amalekites, (who first of all attacked them in the wilderness ‡;) and in the conquests of all those kingdoms and nations in Canaan, and bordering upon it, of which we read in the book of Joshua. And though, afterwards, they were oppressed by their enemies, no less than seven times during the government of the Judges, and afterwards by the Syrians, Assyrians, and Chaldeans, and, at last, ruined by the Romans, it was because they were not obedient to God's voice, in his laws and prophets§.

The promise, that the Messiah should spring from the loins of Abraham, and that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed‖, is peculiarly memorable, and contains one reason why the Almighty made choice of, and separated him and his posterity from, the rest of mankind; and is properly made, by the sacred writers, the foundation of his dispensations

five years. Isaac was sixty when Jacob was born, *Gen.* xxv. 26. who went into Egypt at one hundred and thirty, *Gen.* xlvii. 9. and the Israelites sojourned there two hundred and ten, or at most two hundred and fifteen years; which complete the number.

* Exod. xii. 37. † Num. i. 45, 46. ‡ Exod. xvii. 8—16.
§ Psa. lxxxi. 13—15. ‖ Gen. xxii. 18. Gal. iii. 16.

to him; and may be regarded as a mark to direct the reader to the great object, to which they ultimately referred. Underſtanding the promiſe, he was exceedingly deſirous of ſeeing its accompliſhment; and, by a remarkable ſtretch of faith, was ſo animated, that, as it were, he leaped forwards with joy to meet the object of his wiſhes*.

From other promiſes and prophecies in the Old Teſtament, we learn, that the great proſperity of the Meſſiah's kingdom was foretold. *I have ſet my king,* ſays Jehovah, *upon my holy hill of Zion. Aſk of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermoſt parts of the earth for thy poſſeſſion*†. *In his days ſhall the righteous flouriſh: and abundance of peace ſo long as the moon endureth. All kings ſhall fall down before him: all nations ſhall ſerve him. His name ſhall endure for ever: his name ſhall be continued as long as the ſun; and men ſhall be bleſſed in him; and all nations ſhall call him bleſſed*‡. The prophet Iſaiah, tranſported with the foreſight of the birth of the Meſſiah, and of the glorious kingdom of his grace, ſaith, *Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government ſhall be upon his ſhoulder: and he ſhall be called—the Prince of Peace. Of the increaſe of his government and peace there ſhall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to order and to eſtabliſh it with judgment and juſtice, from henceforth even for ever*§. Daniel, in expounding the dream which Nebuchadnezzar had, having deſcribed the Babylonian, the Perſian, the Grecian, and Roman empires, ſubjoins, *In the days of theſe kings,* that is, of the Roman emperors, *ſhall the God of heaven ſet up a kingdom, which ſhall never be deſtroyed; and the kingdom ſhall not,* like the former, *be left to other people; but it ſhall break in pieces and conſume all theſe kingdoms, and it ſhall ſtand for ever*‖. *I ſaw in the night viſions,* ſays Daniel in another place, *and behold, one like the Son of Man,* which is a character our Saviour often aſſumed

* See Blackwall's Sacred Claſſics, vol. i. p. 46—48.

† Pſa. ii. 6, 8. ‡ Pſa. lxxii. 7, 11, 17. § Iſa. ix. 6, 7.

in the days of his flefh, *came to the Ancient of Days, and there was given to him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, fhould ferve him: his dominion is an everlafting dominion, which fhall not pafs away, and his kingdom that which fhall not be deftroyed**. Gabriel the angel, in foretelling the birth of the promifed Meffiah to his mother, fpake thefe words, *He fhall be great, and the Lord fhall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he fhall reign over the houfe of Jacob for ever: and of his kingdom there fhall be no end*†.

The learned Dr. Jortin fays, The miracles of Chrift were prophecies at the fame time; they were fuch miracles as, in a particular manner, fuited his character, they were fignificant emblems of his defigns, and figures aptly reprefenting the benefits to be conferred by him upon mankind; and they had in them, if we may fo fpeak, a fpiritual fenfe. He caft out evil fpirits, who, by the divine providence, were permitted to exert themfelves, at that time, and to poffefs many perfons. By this he fhowed, that he came to deftroy the empire of Satan, and feemed to foretel, that, wherefoever his doctrine fhould prevail, idolatry and vice would be put to flight.—He gave fight to the blind, (a miracle well fuiting him who brought life and immortality to light,) and taught truth to the ignorant world. He himfelf leads us to this obfervation, and fets his miracle in the fame view, faying upon that occafion, *I am the light of the world; I am come into this world, that they which fee not, might fee*‡.—He cured the deaf, and the dumb, and the lame, and the infirm, and cleanfed the lepers, and healed all manner of ficknefles; to fhow, at the fame time, that he was the Phyfician of fouls, which have their difeafes correfponding in fome manner to thofe of the body, and are deaf, and dumb, and impotent, and paralytic, and leprous, in the fpiritual fenfe.—He fed the hungry multitudes by a miracle, which aptly reprefented his heavenly doctrine, and the Gofpel he preached to the

* Dan. vii. 13, 14. † Luke i. 32, 33. ‡ John viii. 12.

poor, which he himself thus explains, saying, *I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever**.—At his direction the Disciples twice cast the net, and had an astonishing draught of fishes, when, without him, they had long toiled in vain and caught nothing; an image of the success which they should have when they became fishers of men, as he himself explained it. In the miraculous draught related by the Evangelist†, the number of fishes was one hundred and fifty three, which, says Sam. Basnage, is the number of the sorts of fishes then known; for Oppian reckons up just so many; and this, adds he, was an indication, that persons of all nations and conditions should enter into the Church‡.—His rebuking the winds and the waves into silence and peace, may be considered as an emblem of his spiritual victories over the mad rage of Jews and Gentiles; and his walking upon the sea, seems to have been a prelude of the amazing progress of the gospel, which crossed the wide ocean, and reached the remotest lands§.

Our Saviour, in a conversation he had with Peter, foretold the success and establishment of his own religion. Peter having made a confession of his faith in him, saying, *Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God;*—Jesus returned him for answer, *Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock* (probably pointing to himself) *I will build my church: and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.* He took occasion, from Peter's name, which signifies a stone, to speak of himself under the metaphor of a rock, upon which he would build his church. And, with regard to its security upon this foundation, he saith, *the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.* It was the custom among the Jews, to have in their gates the chief fortifications of their cities; there were their magazines, armories, and warlike stores; there were

* John vi. 51. † John xxi. ‡ Ann. Eccl. 1. p. 415.
§ Jortin's Remarks on Ecclesiastical History, vol. 2. p. 15—22.

their courts of juſtice; and there ſat their judges and magiſtrates, the members of the ſmaller conſiſtory, in council, to hear and determine cauſes, and exerciſe judgment. So that, by *hell*, he means the devil's city, (ſo to ſpeak) which is oppoſed to the church, the city of the living God; and, by the *gates* of hell, the united power and policy of Satan and his angels; whoſe attempts to deſtroy Chriſtianity, would be in vain.

The parable of the muſtard-ſeed, is ſignificantly deſcriptive of the progreſs of the Chriſtian religion. The kingdom of heaven, ſays Chriſt, is like a grain of muſtard-ſeed, which, when ſown, is among the leaſt of all ſeeds*; but its growth is more prodigious than that of any other; in as much as it becomes a tree, and affords ſhelter even to the fowls of the air†. By the ſmallneſs of this ſeed, is ſet forth the beginning of Chriſt's kingdom: he and his Apoſtles, compared with the reſt of mankind, appeared but like a grain of muſtard-ſeed.—By the ſtrength of the ſtalk, or ſize of the tree that it grows to, is repreſented, that the Goſpel would ſtrongly and wonderfully prevail and increaſe: like the vine brought out of Egypt, which took root and filled the earth‡. So it did; for the Chriſtian religion was carried, as on angels' wings, far and near by the preaching of the Apoſtles.—And by the uſe of its branches, when grown up to a tree, namely, that the birds of the air ſhould come and lodge in them, we may gather, that Believers would fly to them for food, for reſt, for ſhade, and for ſhelter. The deſcription of Nebuchadnezzar's tree is very applicable to the church of Chriſt: "The tree grew, and was ſtrong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the ſight thereof unto the end of all the earth. The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in

* That the muſtard-ſeed is *among the leaſt of all ſeeds*, ſeems to be more accurate than *the leaſt of all ſeeds*; for it has been remarked that Poppy and Cypreſs ſeeds are leſs than muſtard-ſeed, the latter of which are ſaid to be ſo ſmall that they can ſcarcely be ſeen when ſeparated. Lightfoot ſhows, that *a grain of muſtard-ſeed* was a proverbial ſaying among the Jews, to denote the leaſt thing poſſible; and ſome muſtard-trees were ſo large, as to admit a man to climb them with as much ſecurity as a fig-tree.

† Matt. xiii. 31, 32. ‡ Pſa. lxxx. 8, 9.

it was meat for all: the beaſts of the field had ſhadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all fleſh was fed of it*."

The ſame repreſentation, carried ſomewhat farther, Jeſus gave under another ſimilitude. Chriſtianity, ſaid he, is like a ſmall portion of leaven; which being covered with a large quantity of meal, is not ſeen at firſt; but beginning to ferment, by degrees ſpreads over the whole maſs†. This parable may be conſidered as a kind of prophecy, that his Religion would, in time, overſpread the whole world; and though parables of this texture (as we have ſeveral of a prophetic caſt) were obſcure at firſt; yet, on their completion, they certainly tend greatly to confirm the goſpel‡. It may alſo be conſidered, as elucidating the progreſs of grace in the heart of a true Believer in Chriſt. Becauſe, as leaven is of a diffuſive quality, ſo is the grace of our Saviour; when it is received into the heart, it leavens the whole man, the ſoul in all its powers, the body in all its members: as leaven is of an aſſimilating quality, ſo the Goſpel, attended with the bleſſing of God, changes the heart and life into its own likeneſs: as leaven worketh gradually, yet quickly, ſo doth divine grace in the hearts of Believers; it ſoon takes effect, and carries on a work of progreſſive ſanctification: as leaven worketh ſecretly, and yet powerfully, ſo the Goſpel of Chriſt is quick and powerful, and its operations are inviſible to the bodily eye.

What Gamaliel ſaid of this Religion to his fellow-ſenators, ſhows his great diſcernment and moderation, and leaves it at full liberty to prove its own origin and worth, by either making its way in the world, or ſoon ſinking into obſcurity and neglect.----*If this counſel, or this work, be of men, it will come to nought: but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it*§; that is, if this doctrine be a cunningly deviſed fable, for the accompliſhing of a ſecular intereſt, under the colour of religion, Providence will detect the impoſture, and it will come to nought; therefore it is needleſs for you to perſecute

* Dan. iv. 11, 12. † Matt. xiii. 33. ‡ Gilpin's Expoſition.
§ Acts v. 38, 39.

it; have but patience, and the cauſe will die of itſelf, and then its propagators will become odious and ridiculous: but, if the doctrine be the truth of God, and he have raiſed that Jeſus, whom they call their maſter, from the dead, and have put ſuch honour upon him, as they ſay, and if they have received a commiſſion from him to publiſh it to the world, ye cannot overthrow it, for the counſel of the Lord ſhall ſtand. This was good and ſeaſonable advice for his fellow-ſenators: but what the principles were whence it proceeded, whether from policy, or from ſome conviction of the truth of the Goſpel-doctrine, or from moderation, he being againſt perſecution for conſcience' ſake, we cannot determine. Were we to reſt the truth of Chriſtianity on its progreſs and eſtabliſhment in the world, the concluſion would be deciſive, that it is of God.

It is eaſy to imagine, that the divine miſſion of our Saviour would be called in queſtion, and his doctrine oppoſed, by the ignorant, the bigoted, and the wicked, among both Jews and Heathens. The Chriſtian religion would have to combat the rooted prejudices of the Jews, and all the idolatry and ſuperſtition among the Heathen, which had obtained in the world for ſo many ages. It would have to make its way againſt the united force of power and policy, prejudice and intereſt. Notwithſtanding which, at its firſt promulgation, which, for diſtinction's ſake, we ſhall reckon from the Day of Pentecoſt, it triumphed over all oppoſition made by princes and philoſophers, ungodly men and infernal ſpirits, to prevent its progreſs. Many Jews renounced their own religion, that in which they had been educated, and for which they had ſo great a predilection, and, in the face of perſecution, and at the hazard of their lives, embraced the religion of Jeſus Chriſt. Multitudes of Heathens were converted to Chriſt, and, renouncing their idol-gods, worſhipped the true God. Pagan temples were forſaken, for Chriſtian worſhip; and the fetters of ſuperſtition were broken off, for the glorious liberty of the Goſpel. The ſlaves, with amazement, heard the glad ti-

dings of salvation published; felt their chains lighter; and rejoiced, that they should be numbered with the children of God. Eyes that had never seen the light of truth, were opened; ears that had never heard the sound of mercy, were unstopped; consciences, festering with the disease of sin, were probed to the bottom, and healed by an application of the blood of Christ. Hearts, in which Satan had long reigned, were changed, and made subject to the Prince of Peace: and tongues which, with regard to true devotion, had rested in silence, were now employed in speaking his praise.

We shall now proceed to trace, step by step, the rapid progress, and extensive spread, of the Christian Religion, from its first promulgation at Jerusalem, to its legal establishment under Constantine, the Roman Emperor; which, when all the circumstances attending it are considered, will not only appear wonderful, but, it is hoped, afford the sincere Christian both pleasure and profit, and also tend to remove Deistical objections.

At the commencement of our Saviour's public ministry, he chose twelve Apostles to attend him, and then seventy Disciples; whom he sent by two and two, before his face, into every place whither he himself would go: during which time, it does not appear, that he and they were very successful in their ministry. For, even after his resurrection, and a little previous to his ascension, probably he had not many more than five hundred followers. St. Paul, alluding to this period, says, *he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once*, and the greater part of these were alive when he wrote the Epistle, in which he mentions this remarkable circumstance*. The late reverend Mr. Milner, in his History of the Church of Christ, says, the five hundred brethren, who saw him all at one time, after his resurrection, seem to have made the sum total of his disciples. This appearance of Christ, was the most solemn one he ever made of himself, after his resurrection from the dead; and, most likely, those who were

* 1 Cor. xv. 6.

favoured with the ſight, were the aggregate of his diſciples. For this happened in Galilee, where the greater number of them lived. He ordered his Apoſtles to go from Jeruſalem into Galilee, and promiſed that they ſhould ſee himthere:—probably Mount Tabor, where he had been transfigured, was the place. This command to go, and the promiſe that they ſhould ſee him there, would ſoon be made known to all the diſciples; and can it be ſuppoſed, that any of them who could go, would be abſent on that important and intereſting occaſion?

Almoſt immediately after Chriſt's aſcenſion to heaven, about one hundred and twenty of the above five hundred brethren, aſſembled together at Jeruſalem, in an upper room, in obedience to his command, till they were endued with power from on high. Dr. Lightfoot reckons, that the eleven Apoſtles, the ſeventy Diſciples, and about thirty nine more of Chriſt's own kindred, and countrymen who were familiar with him, made up the 120, and that theſe were a ſort of ſynod, or congregation of miniſters. Epiphanius* ſays, this upper room was upon Mount Sion, and that a Chriſtian Church was afterwards erected upon the ground where it had ſtood. Nicephorus† adds, the room was in the houſe of John the Evangeliſt, in the ſame Mount: it was, however, ſome place that was both private and convenient for them; and upper rooms were often ſufficiently large for containing a conſiderable number of perſons. And ten days after the aſcenſion, when they were all with one accord in this one place, the promiſe of the gift of the Holy Spirit was accompliſhed. The hiſtory of the pouring forth of the Holy Ghoſt upon the Apoſtles, to qualify them with miraculous powers, for the diſcharge of the high office to which they were called; that is, to be witneſſes to Chriſt in

* Epiphanius, biſhop of Salamis, in Cyprus, born A. D. 332, choſen biſhop about 367, was very converſant in eccleſiaſtical antiquities; on which account he is chiefly regarded.

† Nicephorus Caliſtus was a Greek hiſtorian, who flouriſhed in the fourteenth century, under the emperor Andronicus II. and wrote an Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, containing the tranſactions of the Church, from the birth of Chriſt to the death of Phocas in 610.

Jeruſalem, in all Judea, and in Samaria, and to the uttermoſt parts of the earth, is as remarkable an event as any upon record in the Sacred Writings.

Thus qualified with the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, the Apoſtles immediately entered upon the arduous work of the miniſtry, and the divine bleſſing remarkably attended their labours. The effects which Peter's ſermon, in particular, had upon the Jews, were compunction and inquiry. When they heard, that they had crucified * ſo excellent a perſon as God had conſtituted to be the Meſſiah, the Saviour of mankind, and head of the Church; and that he had raiſed him from the dead, taken him up into heaven, and there crowned him with glory and dignity, and that he ſhould ſubdue all his enemies; they were *pricked in their heart* for ſin. The work of converſion begins with conviction and remorſe; and ſin will be painful in the iſſue, either here or hereafter, however pleaſant it ſeem to the fleſh when committed. The ſolemn inquiry which theſe Jews made of Peter and the reſt of the Apoſtles, was, *Men and brethren, what ſhall we do?* This queſtion ſhows, that they had a ſenſe of

* When a perſon was crucified, he was nailed to the croſs, (as it lay upon the ground,) through each hand extended to its utmoſt ſtretch, and through both the feet together; the croſs was then erected, and the foot of it thruſt with violence into a hole prepared in the ground to receive it. By this means, the body, whoſe whole weight hung upon the nails which went through the hands and feet, was completely disjointed, and the ſufferer at laſt expired by the force of pain. This kind of death, which was the moſt cruel, ſhameful, and curſed death that could be deviſed, was uſed only by the Romans for ſlaves, and the baſeſt of the people, who were capital offenders. Sometimes a fire was kindled at the foot of the croſs, that ſo the ſufferer might periſh by the ſmoke and flame. It has been thought, that below the crucified perſon's feet, was a kind of footſtool, or piece of wood jutting out, on which his feet were placed and faſtened. Without this, the criminal could not have long continued nailed to the croſs, the whole weight bearing upon his hands. Some aſſert, that there are no traces of this footſtool, in thoſe deſcriptions of the croſs which the moſt ancient Greek and Latin writers have left us; but they ſpeak of a kind of wooden horſe, upon which the ſuffering perſon was mounted, that ſo his hands might not be torn aſunder by the weight of his body: this was a large peg, fixed about half way up the croſs, as appears in Juſtin, Irenæus, and others. Sometimes they who were faſtened upon the croſs, lived long in that condition. Andrew is believed to have lived three days upon it; others nine days. Euſebius (lib. vii. cap. 8.) ſpeaks of certain martyrs in Egypt, who were kept on the croſs till they were ſtarved to death. Sometimes they were devoured by birds and beaſts of prey; and generally after death, by wolves, dogs, and birds. Guards were appointed to obſerve that none took them down and buried them.—*Burder.*

their ſin and danger, and were ready to do any thing the Apoſtles ſhould direct, in order to eſcape the wrath to which their crimes expoſed them. When ſinners are brought thus to know themſelves, and inquire of Miniſters and Chriſtians, what they ſhall do to be ſaved, there is great hope concerning them. A powerful and ſearching miniſtry, is a diſtinguiſhed bleſſing; and the means that God hath appointed to make men ſenſible of their loſt ſtate, by nature and practice, and to prepare them for receiving pardon and ſalvation through Chriſt. Peter directed them to *repent*, of all their other ſins, as well as that of their being acceſſary to the crucifixion of Chriſt; and, as a proof of the genuineneſs of their faith in Jeſus Chriſt, to take upon them the profeſſion of Chriſtianity, by ſubmitting to be baptized in his name, for the remiſſion of ſins; with a promiſe that they ſhould receive the Holy Ghoſt, in his graces and comforts, if not his miraculous and extraordinary gifts. And the ſame day, on which the the Spirit was thus given, and the Apoſtles began their miniſtry, *there were added* to the infant church, *about three thouſand ſouls* *!

This was a ſudden and great acceſſion, and ſhows, that the Spirit poured forth, attending the preaching of the Apoſtles, filled it with convincing and converting energy. And how ſurpriſing it is, that ſuch a deſcription of perſons, ſo many of them, and in ſo ſhort a time, ſhould be thus affected with guilty fear, and ſorrow for their ſins; ſhould ſubmit themſelves to the

* Acts ii. 41. A learned commentator obſerves, that the Greek words Προς ετεθησαν, rendered *there were added*, emphatically ſignify, *to paſs over* to a body of men; and imply, that theſe perſons renounced their former religious profeſſion, and embraced that of the Apoſtles. It has been commonly aſſerted, that *the three thouſand* here mentioned, were converted by one ſermon; but it is probable, that, whilſt St. Peter was preaching to the Jews of Judea, in the Syriac language, the other Apoſtles were preaching, at a ſmall diſtance, much to the ſame purpoſe, in other languages: and it is not to be imagined, that none of them but Peter was bleſſed, as the means of converting ſouls. This remarkable circumſtance not only confirmed the truth of the Apoſtles, in laying claim to the inſpiration of the Holy Ghoſt, but likewiſe ſerved as a proof of its reality; and as an encouragement to undertake that office, for which it qualified them.

Apostles, and inquire of them, how they were to be saved; and, by their direction, embrace Christ as the true Messiah, who had been but lately crucified as an impostor, and Barabbas (a robber) preferred to him! The recent sufferings of Christ; the prevailing report, that he was risen from the dead; the present display of the miraculous gift of tongues; the seriousness, authority, and zeal, with which the Apostles preached; and, above all, the light and power of the Holy Spirit, contributed to effect this numerous conversion. And not a doubt remains, but that the evidence which supported Christianity, was perfectly satisfactory to those who embraced it: they were at the place where Christ had been betrayed, into the hands of the chief priests and elders; examined, both in the civil court, before Pilate*, and the ecclesiastical one, before the council; crucified without the gates of the city, between two thieves, at one of their solemn feasts; had risen from the dead, to the confusion of the Roman guard, which was placed to watch the sepulchre, to prevent any fraud.

It has been observed, says the pious and learned Dr. Doddridge†, that, as our Lord was crucified at one of the great Jewish feasts, it was fit that he should be glorified at another. And this of Pentecost was cho-

* Pilate wrote, and caused to be fixed to his cross, (called by Matthew *the accusation*, by John *the title*, by Mark and Luke) *the superscription*—THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS. It was a custom with the Romans, to put a writing upon the cross on which a malefactor suffered, signifying the crime for which he died, to vindicate public justice, and shame the person condemned. The one fixed to the top of the cross of Christ, was in large letters; that it might be read at a distance. It was in three different languages; Greek, Latin, and Hebrew: in Greek, for the use of the Hellenists: in Latin, for the Romans; and in Hebrew, for the Jews: the design of this was, that it might be read and understood by people who spoke these languages. As Pilate condemned our Saviour to please the Jews, so he caused this superscription to be put on his cross to please the Romans, particularly the Emperor. He intended it for our Saviour's reproach, but he really did him honour; for hereby his innocence and sovereignty were proclaimed: here is no crime alleged, but he is declared *King of the Jews*. The Jews, apprehensive, that, hereby, too much honour was given him, said, *Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am the King of the Jews*. But Pilate answered, *What I have written, I have written*; as if he had said, What I have written shall not be altered: so was he the instrument of publishing the *truth*, to all that read this writing; and which was acknowledged afterwards by thousands, who embraced the Christian faith.

† Family Expositor.

ſen with peculiar propriety, as next ſucceeding that of the Paſſover, at which Chriſt had ſuffered: and alſo, as it was celebrated in commemoration of the giving of the Law from mount Sinai, on that day; and as the firſt-fruits were then offered and anointed. To theſe anſwered the fuller diſcovery of the Goſpel on this occaſion, and the firſt-fruits of the Chriſtian Church by the effuſion of the ſpirit.—The ſolemnity of the feaſt; the general expectation of the Meſſiah, which prevailed among them; and the length of the days, as it was about the middle of ſummer; would certainly bring great numbers to Jeruſalem at that time; who, when they returned, and reported this extraordinary event, would naturally create, in thoſe who dwelt near them, a greater veneration for the doctrine of the Apoſtles.

During the feſtival of Pentecoſt, Peter and John, at the hour of evening prayer*, went up together into the temple; and, as they were about to go in, a certain poor man, forty years old, lame from his mother's womb, who was carried daily to the Temple, and ſat at one of the gates, aſked alms of them. Having engaged their attention, Peter ſaid, *Silver and gold have I none; but ſuch as I have, give I unto thee: In the name of Jeſus Chriſt of Nazareth, riſe up and walk. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ancle-bones received ſtrength. And*

* The Jews divided the time, from the riſing to the ſetting of the ſun, into twelve hours, which were conſequently, at different times of the year, of unequal lengths, as the days were longer or ſhorter. The *third hour*, therefore, was nine in the morning, and the *ninth*, three in the afternoon; but not exactly, for the *third* was the middle ſpace between ſun-riſe and noon; which, if the ſun roſe at five, (the earlieſt hour of its riſing in that climate) was half an hour after eight; if at ſeven, (the lateſt hour of its riſing there) was half an hour after nine; and ſo on. The chief hours of prayer, were the third and ninth; at which ſeaſons the morning and evening ſacrifices were offered, and incenſe, as an emblem repreſenting prayer, burned on the golden altar. Though by the death of Chriſt, all ſacrifices, and other things required in the ceremonial law, were utterly aboliſhed, and a new covenant was introduced; yet, that the weak might not be offended, and eſtranged from his religion, our Lord ſuffered his diſciples to frequent the aſſemblies of the Jews, and, in ſome points, to comply with the obſervances of the law, till a more pure and ſpiritual form of worſhip could be eſtabliſhed. This is the reaſon why we find the Apoſtles ſo frequently in *the temple*, at the ſtated hours of prayer.

Grotius, Doddridge, and Joſeph. Antiq. lib. 14. *cap.* 4.

*he leaping up, ſtood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praiſing God**. All the people knew, that he was the poor lame man who ſat at the gate of the temple for alms; and they ſaw him ſtand without leaning, walk without ſtaff, and heard him praiſing God (not the Apoſtles, though no doubt thankful to them) for his unexpected cure. The people, being amazed at this miracle, flocked in great multitudes about the Apoſtles in Solomon's porch†, earneſtly gazing on them, and wondering at the ſtrange cure they had wrought. Peter, ſeeing this, ſoon informed them, that he and John had not done this by any power or holineſs of their own, but aſcribed the honour of it to Jeſus; and that they, through faith in his power to effect it, had been the inſtruments.

After having ſpent probably ſome hours in preaching to the people; the Prieſts, the Sadducees, and the Captain of the temple, being enraged with anger and grief, came, ſeized, and impriſoned them for that night. The prieſts were offended, becauſe the Apoſtles, whom they looked upon only as private men, undertook to preach publicly, and boldly, the religion of Chriſt, and that even in the temple: the Sadducees were diſpleaſed, becauſe, in teſtifying the reſurrection of Chriſt, they effectually preached that doctrine which they diſclaimed and deteſted; and for the ſuppreſſion of which, the chief prieſts and the elders had given large bribes to the Roman ſoldiers who guarded the ſepulchre, and directed them to ſay, his diſciples came by night and ſtole away his body while they ſlept‡: (a moſt improbable ſtory, conſidering all circumſtances!)

* Acts iii. 6, 7, 8.

† Not the ſame Porch that Solomon built, for that was, together with the whole Temple, deſtroyed by the Chaldeans, but another built on the ſame place, by Zerobabel or Herod, and called his.

‡ Chriſt's reſurrection was at the time of celebrating the Paſſover, a ſolemn feſtival of the Jews, inſtituted in commemoration of their coming out of Egypt; the ſcene was in Jeruſalem, the metropolis of Judea, at that time much crowded with Jews, who came thither from all parts of the earth, to keep the Paſſover. The actors and witneſſes were the Chief Prieſts and Elders, Pontius Pilate the Roman governor, and the Roman ſoldiers who guarded the ſepulchre. Now, if the ſtory of guarding the ſepulchre had been falſe, it is not to be doubted but that the Chief Prieſts and Elders, who are ſaid to have obtained the guard, and ſealed the door of the ſepulchre, would, by ſome au-

and the Captain of the Roman garrison, who lay in the tower Antonia, near to the temple, to guard it, seeing such a crowd of people gathered about the Apostles, began to apprehend a tumult.

Notwithstanding, their preaching was attended with astonishing efficacy; for *many of them who heard the word, believed: and the number of the men*, exclusive of the women, *was about five thousand**. Either five thousand were converted to the Christian faith at once, under Peter's preaching to that great concourse of people assembled in the Portico; which Benson, Henry, an others think was the case; or two thousand were added to the three thousand just mentioned; of which opinion are Doddridge and Paley. According to the belief of the former, the Christian Church would consist of about eight thousand persons; and to that of the latter, of about five thousand: and, in either sense, the prevalence of truth was remarkably powerful and triumphant.

thentic act, have cleared themselves of the folly and guilt imputed to them by the evangelist Matthew, who charges them with having bribed the soldiers, to tell not only a lie, but an absurd one, which carried its own confutation along with it; the soldiers with confessing a breach of discipline, which, by the military law, was punishable with death; and the Governor, with the suspicion, at least, of being capable of overlooking so heinous a crime, at the instigation of the Chief Priests, &c. All these several charges upon the whole government of Judea, might have been answered at once, by an attestation from the Chief Priests, setting forth, that they never demanded a guard to be set at the sepulchre, confirmed by the testimony of the Roman soldiers, (many of whom were probably at Jerusalem when the Gospel was written) denying that they were ever upon that guard. This, not only the reputation of the Chief Priests, but their avowed malice to Christ, and aversion to his doctrine and religion, required; and this, even upon a supposition of the story of guarding the sepulchre being true, they would probably have done, had they been at liberty to invent and propagate what lie they pleased. But that a guard was set at the sepulchre, was, in all likelihood, by the dispersion and flight of the soldiers into the city, too well known in Jerusalem, for them to venture at denying it: for which reason they were obliged to invent a lie consistent with that known fact, however absurd and improbable it might appear when it came to be considered. Now, as the report put into the mouths of the Roman soldiers, by the Chief Priests and Elders, is no proof of the falsehood of this fact, but rather of the contrary; so does the naming of the scene, the actors, and the witnesses, form a very strong presumption of its being true: since no forger of lies, willingly and wittingly, furnishes the means of his own detection; especially when we consider, that this story is related by that Evangelist, who is said to have composed his Gospel for those Christians who dwelt in Judea, many of whom then living, were probably at Jerusalem when this thing was done.

* Acts iv. 4. *See West on the Resurrection.*

On the morrow their trial commenced. Their judges were rulers, elders, ſcribes, high-prieſts, and ſome noted men of their kindred; the members of the Sanhedrim, the magiſtrates of the city; men of the greateſt power and learning among the Jews, who, though they might be of different principles and intereſts, yet were all united, and as one man, in their oppoſition to the Chriſtian religion, to put it out as ſoon as it ſhined forth; like Herod, who ſought to deſtroy Chriſt in his infancy. Both the Sanhedrim and the Conſiſtories, which were the ſupreme and inferior courts among the Jews, ſat in a circular form; the two Apoſtles, and the man on whom they had wrought the miracle, were placed in the midſt of them. They then demanded of them, by what power and authority, human or diabolical, angelic or divine, they had cured the cripple, and preached ſuch doctrine as they had delivered the preceding day in the temple? Peter, filled with the Holy Ghoſt, ſaid to them, the miracle wrought upon the impotent man was *a good deed*, deſerving the commendation of the court, and not a proſecution; and was ſuch as rulers ought not to be a terror to. And reſpecting that part of the examination, *by what means he was made whole;* he, raiſing his voice, ſaid, *Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Iſrael, be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Iſrael, that, by the name of Jeſus Chriſt of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raiſed from the dead, even by him doth this man ſtand here before you whole.* He proceeds in preaching Chriſt to them. *This was the ſtone which was ſet at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there ſalvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we muſt be ſaved.* Here we perceive, that he was the ſame in the preſence of his judges, that he had been before the common people; his doctrine to the court, and that to the multitude in Solomon's porch, were alike; he charged the former with having crucified Chriſt, and the latter with giving their vote for it. And he preached the reſurrection of Chriſt, in the moſt explicit and un-

daunted manner, to that aſſembly of great and wiſe men; who, it appears, never once ſaid to the Apoſtles themſelves, that they came by night and ſtole away their Maſter's body; and the ſilence herein manifeſted is a direct evidence, that they had no teſtimony to ſupport what they had authorized the ſoldiers to publiſh, as a fact, to the world.

This bold anſwer produced a conſiderable effect upon the court. They were filled with wonder and amazement, that theſe illiterate men*, who had not been educated in their ſchools and univerſities, (conſequently deſtitute of the learning that was in vogue among them,) ſhould, nevertheleſs, diſcourſe ſo pertinently, and with ſuch pathos. Their courage, and the convincing evidence of truth, accompanied by miracles, confounded and ſilenced theſe judges; but did not bring them over to Chriſtianity. The ſame ſermon, preached to the people the day preceding, was attended with ſo great ſucceſs, that ſome thouſands were converted to Chriſt; but now, when delivered before this Council, not one of the members embraced this religion. They had the ſame opportunity of others, but the ſpirit of pride and perſecution, under which they acted, prevented their receiving the divine bleſſing.

They now commanded the priſoners to go aſide out of the council, (under a guard of ſoldiers, no doubt,) while they held a conſultation among themſelves upon the whole matter, and what they ſhould do, or after what manner proceed. They wiſhed to be ſevere, whether right or wrong; nor heſitated at being unjuſt, as appears from their treatment of the innocent, righteous, beneficent Jeſus, about ſeven weeks before. But what was moſt vexatious, was the evidence of that miracle which the Apoſtles had wrought upon the impotent man: with reluctance they ſaid,—*For that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them, is manifeſt to all them that dwell in Jeruſalem, and we cannot deny it.* Their opinion was, that if they ſhould pro-

* That they viewed the Apoſtles as extremely contemptible may be gathered from the Greek words, ἀγράμματοι καὶ ἰδιῶται, *illiterate ideots.*

ceed to extremities, the hatred and rage of the people would be provoked, their own injuſtice appear as flagrant as the miracle was notable, and all deſpiſe and cenſure them. The fear of man keeps many from doing what the fear of God will not. They at laſt came to this reſolution, (that the report of the miracle might ſpread no further among the people, into all corners of the country) to menace them with terrible threatenings of the moſt grievous puniſhments*. All their care was to ſuppreſs the religion of Chriſt, but in vain; for God had deſigned that it ſhould ſpread over the whole world; and *his counſel ſhall ſtand, and he will do all his pleaſure*†. *The counſel of the LORD ſtandeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations*‡. *There is no wiſdom, nor underſtanding, nor counſel againſt the LORD*§. And they called them in, and commanded, (as men commiſſioned ſo to do,) *that they ſpeak henceforth to no man in this name;* that is, never more, either publicly or privately, preach, nor pray to God, in the name of Jeſus, nor in it work any more miracles.

But Peter and John made this appeal to them: *Whether it be right in the ſight of God, to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye*‖. This was a word in ſeaſon; for a rule, commonly received among their noted Rabbins, ſpecified, that when God's commands and men's injunctions oppoſe each other, his muſt be obeyed,—theirs diſobeyed. They added, that they could not forbear proclaiming, wherever they went, the truths relating to Chriſt, having been eye and ear witneſſes thereof, and charged with the higheſt commiſſion to preach them; and this, through grace, they were fully determined to do, let who would forbid it. Thus they ſet the malignity and power of their perſecutors at defiance. Thoſe who are clearly convinced of the truth and divine authority of the Chriſtian religion, that have felt its ſaving influence upon their own ſouls, and duly conſider the importance thereof to others,

* The original words, ἀπειλῇ ἀπειλησώμεθα, ſignify this.
† Iſa. xlvi. 10 ‡ Pſa. xxxiii. 11. § Prov. xxi. 30. ‖ Acts iv. 19.

will give teſtimony to it, (when called ſo to do,) in the face of the greateſt oppoſition and danger. When the Council found themſelves unable to prevail, they added further threatenings; and ſo diſmiſſed them.

Being liberated, they went immediately to the reſt of the Apoſtles and Believers, perhaps to the *hundred and twenty*, who ſtill continued together; they reported to them all that their perſecutors had ſaid, and, no doubt, what they themſelves had anſwered. Theſe things were related, that the company might join with them in praiſing God for their deliverance, and praying to him for further mercy.—And when the report had been heard, they, with great fervency, ſaid,—*Lord, thou art the God who madeſt heaven and earth, and the ſea, and all that in them is: who ſaidſt by the mouth of thy ſervant David*, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth ſet themſelves in array, and the rulers were gathered together againſt the Lord and againſt his Chriſt. For of a truth, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Iſrael, were gathered together againſt thy holy child Jeſus, whom thou haſt anointed, to do whatſoever thy hand and thy counſel before determined to be done. And now, Lord, behold their threatenings, and give thy ſervants to ſpeak thy word with all boldneſs, while thou ſtretcheſt forth thy hand to heal, and ſigns and wonders are done through the name of thy holy child Jeſus*†. To this prayer God was pleaſed immediately to return a remarkable anſwer. Of old he teſtified his acceptance of the ſacrifices and prayers of the righteous, by ſending, or appearing after ſome peculiar manner in a

* Acts iv. 24—30.

† Pſal. ii. 1, 2. Though David's name is not in the title of this pſalm, yet we are here aſſured that he was the penman of it. The pſalm contains a prediction of the oppoſition that would be made to the Meſſiah's kingdom. We are told who the oppoſers would be—*the heathen and the people*, i. e. the *the kings of the earth, and the rulers*: by *Kings* here may be primarily intended Herod and Pilate, both Heathens or Gentiles, chief governors in Judea, though not in a ſtrict ſenſe Kings. And by *Rulers* are meant the Jewiſh Sanhedrim; theſe began the oppoſition to the Meſſiah's kingdom, but it ended not with them. We have the Perſons againſt whom the Pſalmiſt foreſaw this oppoſition would be made; they are *the LORD and his CHRIST*, that is, God and the Meſſiah. What is done againſt Chriſt, the anointed Meſſiah, God the

cloud: but now, the place, where theſe perſons were aſſembled, and prayed with one accord, was ſhaken; probably by a mighty wind like that on the day of Pentecoſt, when the Spirit was poured out upon them; and being again filled with the Holy Ghoſt, they boldly preached the word. Particularly it is ſaid, *And with great power gave the Apoſtles witneſs of the reſurrection of the Lord Jeſus**. They were choſen to be witneſſes of his reſurrection, conſequently this was the chief doctrine they preached; and, by aſſerting and proving it, they eſtabliſhed the whole Chriſtian ſyſtem. Dr. Lightfoot thinks, that at this time the Apoſtles received the power of conferring the Spirit upon others.

In this flouriſhing ſtate of the primitive Church, Ananias and Sapphira his wife, both profeſſors of the religion of Chriſt, committed an enormous crime, for which they ſuffered an alarming puniſhment. The Chriſtians who had property, ſold the ſame for the maintenance of the Apoſtles, and the relief of the poor†. Theſe perſons, as if they had intended to imitate the zeal and liberality of Barnabas, alſo ſold a poſſeſſion of land, that they might contribute to this charitable fund; but wickedly agreed, in private, to keep back part of the price, and publicly to deliver the remainder for the whole; that by ſo doing they might be aſſiſted out of the common ſtock, as perſons who

Father deems as done againſt himſelf. So our Lord let the Jews know, *ye have hated both me and my Father. John* xv. 24. And what is done againſt Chriſt's Apoſtles and Miniſters, intereſt and kingdom, is reckoned as done againſt himſelf: *He that deſpiſeth you, deſpiſeth me. Luke* x. 16. We have a deſcription of the nature of their oppoſition to the Lord and his Chriſt: it is malicious and outrageous,—they *rage*; it is deliberate,—they *imagine*; it is reſolute,—they *ſet themſelves in array*; it is confederate,—they were *gathered together*: but, after all, it is fruitleſs,—they imagine *vain things*.

* Acts iv. 33.

† Many of the firſt Chriſtians, who were Jews dwelling in Judea, ſold their lands and poſſeſſions. The Gentiles did it not when the Chriſtian religion came to them; and none of St. Paul's epiſtles contain any ſuch precept, or intimate any ſuch practice. The Jews acted thus, though not by command, yet doubtleſs with the approbation of the Apoſtles; and the moſt probable reaſon for it was this: they knew that Chriſt had foretold the deſtruction of their country, which ſhould come upon it before that generation had paſſed away; and therefore they thought it proper, while there was opportunity, to improve to the beſt uſes their eſtates, which they ſhould not long enjoy, by relieving the poorer Brethren, and by enabling the firſt Teachers to purſue their travels from place to place. *Jortin's Remarks.*

had given up all they had. Thus were they guilty of sacrilege, covetousness, hypocrisy, lying, and distrust of Providence. Peter, who had the gift of discerning spirits, immediately detected them, and, by a power derived from on high, pronounced the sentence of death, which God speedily executed*. This was an exemplary punishment, inflicted, not from passion, cruelty, nor revenge, but by a prophetic spirit; not by the sword of the magistrate, nor any authority of his own, but by a miraculous and divine power; punishing a notorious lie, told to tempt or try the Holy Spirit, in the beginning of the Christian dispensation. Thus was the dignity of the Spirit of God vindicated, and the honour of the Apostles supported: for hereby it was evident, that they had the Spirit of truth and power, by which they could easily detect that of falsehood; and that they made no pretensions to divine assistance, in which the Spirit could not bear them out. Indeed, such severity in the beginning of Christianity was highly proper, in order to show its divine authority, and to prevent any occasion for similar punishments in future. The effect thereof was, a great dread and unusual awe fell upon all the Christians; and not upon them alone, but upon all others also who either saw or heard of what had happened. Thus were hypocrites and dishonest persons deterred from joining the Church, lest some such judgment should befall them; hence it remained pure.

But while deceivers were terrified by this signal judgment, the sincere were encouraged openly to avow their faith; and such were very numerous, for the sacred Historian saith, *Believers were the more added to*

* Thus Cain, the first murderer, was most signally punished by the immediate hand of God; as were Sodom and Gomorrah, which, in the early ages, were distinguished for their filthiness and abominations. Thus, at the erecting of God's temporal kingdom among the Jews, Nadab and Abihu were struck dead for offering strange fire before the Lord; and Korah and his company were swallowed up alive by the earth, for opposing Moses, the faithful minister of the Lord; and, lastly, Uzzah, for touching the Ark, fell by as sudden and remarkable a divine judgment, when the kingdom was given to be established in the house of David, to teach Israel a reverence for God and divine things. Nay, in establishing even human laws, a severe punishment inflicted upon the first transgressors, often prevents the punishment of others, who are deterred from the like attempts by the sufferings of the first criminals.

*the Lord, multitudes both of men and women**. Here we may obſerve, that theſe *believers* were of both ſexes; and, as Henry ſays, notice is taken of the converſion of the women as well as the men, more ſo than generally was in the Jewiſh church, in which they neither received the ſign of circumciſion, nor were obliged to attend the ſolemn feaſts, and they met in one of the outer courts of the temple. But as among the faithful followers of Chriſt while on earth, ſo among thoſe that believed on him after he went to heaven, the pious women were particularly regarded. And it is ſaid, that they, as alſo the men who believed, were *added to the Lord.*—Theſe were ſuch believers, as not only gave their aſſent to the truth of Chriſtianity, but accepted of Chriſt, and enjoyed communion with him: which is the privilege of all, as well women as men, who embrace him by faith; there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female, for they are all one in Chriſt Jeſus†.

The High Prieſt, (either Annas or Caiaphas,) and all the members of the Sanhedrim, who were of the ſect of the Sadducees, by ſeeing or hearing of the great increaſe of the Chriſtian Church, and the miracles wrought among the people by the Apoſtles, were filled with indignation; and, to ſtop their further proceedings, they put them into the common priſon, among malefactors, to diſgrace them. But, while the high prieſt and his party thought, that they and their doctrine were ſecurely ſhut up together, and that they would no more trouble the world, the angel of the Lord by night opened the priſon doors, brought them forth, and commiſſioned them, from Chriſt, to go, ſtand in the temple, and preach to the people publicly, courageouſly, and faithfully, *the whole doctrine of Life*‡. And having received that charge, they enter-

* Acts v. 14. † Col. iii. 11.

‡ The phraſe in our tranſlation is *all the words of this life.* The expreſſion *this life*, we ordinarily refer to the common affairs of this world, or preſent life; but that it cannot be ſo underſtood here, is moſt evident. By *the words of this life* is meant, either, more generally, the Goſpel, which ſhows us the way of obtaining *ſpiritual life*, as preparatory to, and the beginning of, *eternal life*, namely, by faith in Chriſt crucified; (this was the way of obtaining life now in

ed therein, as early in the morning as the attendance of any could be expected, and taught.

The High Priest and the Sadducees, who had imprisoned the Apostles the preceding night, now called a full bench, consisting of the members of the Sanhedrim, and those of the inferior courts in the city, who, unacquainted with their miraculous deliverance, sent to the prison to have them brought. But when the officers returned, and told them that they found the doors shut with all safety, the keepers on their duty, and that the prisoners were gone; they were disappointed and confounded, not knowing what to think of the circumstance, nor whereunto it would grow. Though unwilling to own the hand of God, yet, it appears, they were inwardly convinced, that it was supernatural; and, as a proof of this, turned not their vengeance upon the keepers; who would have been severely punished, had they neglected their duty. In the midst of this perplexity, word was brought, that the Apostles were, in the temple, teaching the people. Then the captain thereof, with a band of soldiers, by order of the grand council, went to take them; and from a fear of the displeasure and resentment of the people, was restrained from proceeding with violence; for these men were venerated for their beneficial miracles and powerful sermons.

When they had brought them before this august court, the High Priest, as president, read the indictment against them, in which he charged them with contumacy and sedition:—*Did not we daily command you, that ye should not teach in this name* ?* Yet ye have contemned our authority, obstinately disobeyed our injunctions, and continue preaching in Christ's

dispute, cried up by some, and discountenanced by others:) Or, by *the words of this life* may be here particularly meant, the doctrines of the resurrection of the dead, and a future life, which the Sadducees denied. *Go, speak the words of this life*, τῆς ζωῆς ταύτης, of this same life: this manner of expression shows it to be a peculiar, transcendently excellent life that is here intended. The Gospel contains and reveals the most excellent and noble kind of life, even spiritual and eternal life, through Christ; offers these to dead sinners; and is the instrument or means by which they are conveyed. * Acts iv. 17, 18.

name, againſt our expreſs order. *And behold, ye have filled Jeruſalem with your* factious *doctrine, and,* by repreſenting us as the murderers of your Maſter, *intend to bring* the odium and guilt of *this man's blood upon us.* Peter and the other Apoſtles made this reply, *We ought to obey God rather than men.* They juſtified their diſobedience to the command of the council, from its contrariety to the command of God. This is a dictate of reaſon, a principle admitted and inculcated among the Heathen, as may be ſeen in Antigona, Euripides, Socrates, and others*. And if it were deemed ſedition to repreſent the Council as the murderers of the benevolent, and holy Jeſus, the Apoſtles would be yet more ſeditious, and not only fill Jeruſalem, but even that court with their doctrine. Accordingly they ſaid, *The God of our fathers raiſed up Jeſus, whom ye ſlew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Iſrael, and forgiveneſs of ſins. And we are witneſſes of theſe things; and ſo is alſo the Holy Ghoſt, whom God hath given to them that obey him*†. Their doctrine, their charge againſt the council, and their courage, were all the ſame, as when they were laſt before this court‡. Miniſters ſhould not be frightened into a ſinful ſilence, from the dread of any uneaſineſs it is in the power of their enemies to give them; they ſerve a Maſter who is able to protect them, in the faithful diſcharge of their duty.

When the court heard the bold, firm, and uniform teſtimony of the Apoſtles, *they were cut to the heart*§, with rage and indignation. This repreſentation of their ſin galled their conſciences,---gave them as much inward torment, as if cut to the heart, and increaſed their malice againſt the Apoſtles, and averſion to the holy religion which they preached. They took counſel to ſlay them; reſolving to do that by death, which

* Socrates anſwered his accuſers thus, *O ye Athenians, I will obey God, rather than you.* † Acts v. 30—32. ‡ Acts iv. 10, 11.

§ It has been obſerved by a learned author, that διεπρίοντο expreſſes the action of thoſe, who, through rage, grate with their teeth, as it were with a ſaw; from πρίω, which ſignifies *to cut with a ſaw.* See Acts vii. 54.

they could not accompliſh by threatenings and impriſonment: but were prevented from executing their deſign, by the very excellent advice of Gamaliel*, a member of the council. Therefore, after having ſcourged, and commanded them not to ſpeak in the name of Jeſus, they let them go. This was what Chriſt had foretold, *They will deliver you up to councils, and they will ſcourge you*†. A recollection of the treatment that he received, would reconcile them to this ignominy and pain, for Pilate unjuſtly ordered him to be ſcourged, after he had repeatedly declared he found no fault in him; and after having received advice from his wife, (like that which this council had from Gamaliel,) *Have thou nothing to do with that juſt man*‡. So far from murmuring, they even *rejoiced that they were counted worthy to ſuffer ſhame for his name*§. Moſt likely they called to mind what Chriſt had ſaid to them: *Bleſſed are they which are perſecuted for righteouſneſs' ſake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Bleſſed are ye when men ſhall revile you, and perſecute you, and ſhall ſay all manner of evil againſt you falſely for my ſake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for ſo perſecuted they the prophets which were before you*‖. Being ſet at liberty, they remained not inactive; for *daily in the temple, and in every houſe, they ceaſed not to teach and preach Jeſus Chriſt*¶. How ineffectual were the malicious and renewed attempts of the Jewiſh Sanhedrim, amidſt all the pride of dignity and power,

* St. Luke deſcribes the perſon who gave this advice, by his name, ſect, office, and reputation. He was called Gamaliel, which ſignifies *reward*; he alſo was a *phariſee* by profeſſion and ſect; and a *doctor* of the Law, one who trained up pupils in the knowledge of the ſcriptures of the Old Teſtament,—ſuch by office as a profeſſor of Divinity amongſt us; he had great repute among the Jews, for his learning and conduct; and was therefore uſually called Rabban Gamaliel, a title of the higheſt eminence, and never given, ſay they, to any more than ſeven. Some think he was the perſon at whoſe feet St. Paul, (*Acts* xxii. 3.) Stephen, and Barnabas, were brought up; but we want more authentic documents to prove the certainty of this. He is ſuppoſed to have continued the Naſi or preſident of the Sanhedrim for 32 years, and to have died about ten years after the deſtruction of Jeruſalem. Chriſtian authors make no doubt of his embracing the faith of Jeſus; but at what time he became a convert, or by whoſe hands he was baptized, they no where tell us. † Matt. x. 17.

‡ Matt. xxvii. 19. § Acts v. 41. ‖ Matt. v. 10—12. ¶ Acts. v. 42.

to intimidate the Apoſtles, and oppoſe the counſels of Omnipotence!

Theſe hinderances being removed, *the word of God grew, and the number of diſciples was multiplied in Jeruſalem greatly: and a great company of the prieſts were obedient to the faith**. The obedience of this claſs of men, is a remarkable event, mentioned by the ſacred Hiſtorian, not only as a fact, but as a proof of the power and ſatisfactory evidences that attended Chriſtianity. It is not improbable, but that ſome of theſe had inſulted Jeſus, or encouraged his enemies to crucify him: and now was their unbelief overturned, their prejudices conquered, and their hearts brought into ſubjection to Chriſt. Great is truth, eſpecially that which prevailed: naked, yet victorious over armed error. Their embracing this religion, demonſtrates that they believed it to be divine. Strange, (ſays a ſenſible Writer) that the Prieſts ſhould be ſo! Their reputation, office, and intereſt led them another way: their characters with their brethren would be loſt, and they turned out of the ſynagogue: their employment, according to their new faith, would be aboliſhed: and all their pecuniary aid thereby ceaſe. How were they to ſubſiſt? They had no inheritance in the land; it muſt have been ſome irrefragable evidence that cauſed them to yield obedience to the faith†. Giving up the prejudices of education for the Chriſtian religion: renouncing the emoluments of office, for penury and want; ſacrificing honour and dignified character, for contempt, abuſe, ſlander, and the croſs; and relinquiſhing eaſe and ſafety, for grievous ſufferings, or a violent and cruel death! were no inconſiderable matters. Nothing ſhort of a clear, full, and abiding conviction of the divine authority of Chriſt's miſſion; the accompliſhment of prophecy in his perſon, death, reſurrection, aſcenſion, and interceſſion; the ſufficiency of his atonement to ſatisfy divine juſtice, and purge the conſcience from ſin; and of ſalvation in him alone, could have induced and determined them, in theſe circumſtances, to become Chriſtians.

* Acts vi. 7. † Reynolds's Three Letters to the Deiſt, p. 215, 216.

Now all this ſucceſs happened at Jeruſalem, the identical place where Chriſt had been lately crucified; and in leſs than two years from his aſcenſion: which is but a ſhort period in the propagation of Chriſtianity. It is truly ſingular, that the religion of Jeſus, who had been put to death by the Jews, ſhould, in this ſhort time, gain ſo much credit in their chief city; while all the circumſtances of his apprehenſion, trial, condemnation, and death, were freſh in every perſon's mind: and, alſo, that among the numerous converts to the Chriſtian faith, there ſhould be a great company of the Jewiſh Prieſts (perſons certainly of improved minds, and well qualified to detect any impoſture or cheat,) openly avowing Chriſt, not in ſome retired part of Judea, ſkulking in corners for concealment and ſafety, but in Jeruſalem, in the face of thoſe who had crucified him, and at the hazard of loſing every thing, even life itſelf! How will the Deiſt account for this, without acknowledging the truth of Chriſtianity?

The Chriſtians were not long permitted to remain united in Church fellowſhip at Jeruſalem. The ſtrong prejudice and reſtleſs malice of the Jews, againſt Chriſt and his followers, ſoon were actively employed and awfully diſplayed, in a ſevere perſecution. Stephen, a deacon, and a man of conſiderable ſpiritual gifts, as well as extenſive uſefulneſs, was one of the firſt objects of their rage and cruelty*. Being full of faith and the Holy Ghoſt, he openly wrought great miracles, which, exciting the wonder and admiration of his beholders, ſerved for a confirmation of the religion of Chriſt. The Jews of the diſperſion, who reſided in different countries, had ſynagogues and ſchools

* The reaſon why they chiefly oppoſed him, rather than the Apoſtles, who both preached and wrought miracles, ſome think, was becauſe he had been educated in one of theſe ſchools; probably in that of the Libertines, which belonged to ſuch Jews as were free denizens of Rome; or in that of Cilicia: and having relinquiſhed the Jewiſh religion, and embraced Chriſtianity, they were greatly incenſed againſt him on that account. The Libertines were Jews born at Rome, whoſe grandfathers had been in ſlavery there, and afterwards made free. Great numbers of Jews taken captive there by Pompey, and carried into Italy, were ſet at liberty, and obtained their freedom from their maſters. Their ſons, therefore, according to Wall, would be *liberti*, and their grandſons *libertini*, in the proper ſenſe of the word.

at Jerusalem: to them they sent their youth to be educated in Jewish literature. It is said there were synagogues at this period, among which some were denominated from cities, viz. that concerning those of Libertines, Cyrenians, Alexandrians, Cilicia, and Asia.

Now certain persons of these schools, trained by their tutors in the rigour of Judaism, observing the progress of Christianity, rose up and disputed with Stephen; attempting to destroy, by their arguments, what he promulgated by his miracles. But none of his opponents out of these five seminaries were able to resist the Spirit of Wisdom by which he spake. In him was accomplished that promise of Christ, *I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay, nor resist**. When they found themselves defeated, by his unanswerable arguments, rather than yield to conviction, they suborned men to swear that he was guilty of blasphemy; after the same manner as had previously been done to Christ†. They next proceeded to incense both the government and populace against him: the former to take away his life, for the crime of blasphemy; or if the Sanhedrim should, in this case, follow the good advice that Gamaliel had given them concerning the Apostles, (which was to *refrain from these men, and let them alone*, that then the latter might destroy him in a tumult. Having done this, they violently seized, and haled him to the bar of the Sanhedrim: where their false witnesses, acting according to the private instructions given them, deposed, that they had heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God.

The conclusion of Stephen's answer to this charge, produced a very unhappy effect upon his enemies. Having finished his general discourse to the Jews, he particularly and closely applied it, which *cut them to the heart*, i. e. occasioned as much torment as if they had been cut through with a saw; *and they gnashed on him with their teeth*,‡ which was an outward evi-

* Luke 21. 15. † Matt. xxvi. 69. ‡ See Note, p. 88.

dence of their inward anguish and vexation*. But he, being filled with the Holy Ghost, and seeing to what length their malice would go, told them, he was prepared for the utmost severity thereof,—that he saw heaven opened, and Jesus ready to receive him at the right hand of God. On hearing this, they cried with loud voices, stopped their ears, (as if such language were not fit to be heard,) and, rushing forth with one consent, dragged him out of the city, as if to prevent its being further polluted by his doctrine. The witnesses, putting off their upper garments, that they might be more at liberty for the bloody work, laid them at the feet of Saul of Tarsus, (who was accessary to his death,) and, according to the established law of the Jews, on such an occasion, cast the first stones†. His death was not effected by an act of the council, but by a popular tumult; though they pretended herein to execute the law of Moses, which enacted that a blasphemer should die this death.

The pious and charitable disposition in which he suffered, is deserving of attention and admiration. He prayed for himself in these words, *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit;* and for his murderers in this language, *Lord, lay not this sin to their charge*—literally, *weigh not out to them this sin*‡, that is, a punishment proportionable

* Plutarch says, that tygers, hearing the beat of a drum, run mad, and tear their own flesh. So it often is with persecutors; the hearing of the word of God torments and enrages them. At Acts ii. 37. we read of very different effects produced by Peter's preaching: his hearers *were pricked in their heart*, with grief and sorrow for their sins; and filled with indignation against themselves, for the active part they had taken in Christ's death. But here Stephen's judges were cut to the heart with indignation against him, for charging them with the same sin. The Gospel has various and opposite effects, upon different persons: Ministers are to some, *the savour of death unto death*; and to others, *the savour of life unto life*. 2 Cor. ii. 16. † Deut. xvii. 7.

‡ What a striking resemblance between this Prayer of Stephen, and that of Christ offered to his Father, in his last agony on the cross! *Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do*:—Stephen, *Lord, lay not this sin to their charge*. Christ, *Into thy hands I commit my spirit; and having said thus, he gave up the ghost*:—Stephen, *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit; and when he had said this, he fell asleep*. Stephen died in imitation of this example of Christ, and in obedience to his command, *pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you*. *Matt.* 5. 44. And he worshipped Christ in the very same manner as Christ worshipped the Father on the cross: he *resigned up his soul to Jesus*, with the same confidence, and almost in the same words, with which Jesus gave up *his* to God the Father. How amiable the

the benevolence of his religion influencing their hearts, would deſtroy their enmity againſt the Jews; for, by this truly divine excellence, it is diſtinguiſhed from all other religious ſyſtems; and where it prevails, harmonizes the jarring paſſions of men, reconciles enemies on the baſis of mutual forgiveneſs, and cements friendſhip on the ground of ſincere affection. This ſucceſs was a conſiderable ſtep towards the calling of the Gentiles, of whom the Samaritans originally were, though better prepared than moſt of the Heathen to receive Chriſtianity, becauſe they worſhipped the true God, and acknowledged the authority of the five books of Moſes. Nay, they exceeded, in purity of principle, the body of the Jewiſh nation, as we do not find, that they either expected the Meſſiah's temporal reign, or had received the Sadducean tenets, both of which were diametrically oppoſite to the Chriſtian ſcheme.

When the Apoſtles, who were at Jeruſalem, heard that Samaria had received the word of God, by Philip, they ſent Peter and John thither, to aſſiſt in eſtabliſhing and building up the new converts. This would have a good effect, for in the mouth of two or three witneſſes every word would be eſtabliſhed. In proportion as the work of God ſpreads, it requires and ſhould have additional help; and his ſervants labour willingly and cheerfully when he worketh with them. Exertion, without fruit, is painful; and the greateſt efforts of miniſters, without the divine preſence and bleſſing, are uſeleſs. How gladly would Philip receive Peter and John, and they, in company with him, heartily enter into the gracious work already begun! he would have no fear of ſinking in the eſteem of the people on their arrival, and they would have no deſire he ſhould:

priding himſelf in oppoſing the Apoſtles, and infecting many perſons with his impious errors. (*Irenæus. lib.* 1. *cap.* 20.) For this purpoſe, leaving Samaria, he travelled through ſeveral provinces, ſeeking places where the goſpel had not yet reached, that he might prejudice the minds of men againſt it. (*Theodoret. hæret. fabul. lib* 1. *cap.* 1.) At Tyre, in Phœnicia, he bought a common proſtitute from the ſtews, called Selene or Helene, and took her along with him. (*Theodoret. hæres. Juſtin. Apol.* 2. *Iren. lib.* 1. *cap.* 20. *Tertull de Anim. cap.* 34.) He arrived at Rome in the time of Claudius, about A. D. 41; and, under the reign of Nero, acquired great reputation by his inchantments. He pretended himſelf to be the Chriſt, and formed a ſect of heretics, called *Simonians.*

they had preached the Gofpel in the neighbouring parts, travelled on to Phœnicia, Cyprus, and Antioch.

Philip, who was a deacon in the Church, went to the city of Samaria, thirty-two miles, the metropolis of the country of that name, which was a province of Paleftine, and, according to Dr. Wells, ftretched itfelf from the Mediterranean Sea weftward, to the river Jordan eaftward; including the moft confiderable part of what formerly belonged to the tribe of Ephraim, and the half tribe of Manaffes, on the weft fide of Jordan, and lying exactly between Judea to the fouth, and Galilee to the north. Our Saviour had previoufly foretold the fuccefs that his word would have in this country. When at Sychar, forty miles from Jerufalem, he thus addreffed his difciples, *Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harveft? Behold, I fay unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harveft**. As if he had faid,—multitudes of Samaritans are coming out of the city to me, and in other places there are many prepared to receive the Gofpel, as fields ready for the reaper's hand. He faw the fpiritual harveft ripe already, and that it would be abundant.

In the city of Samaria, Philip preached with great fuccefs, for many of the inhabitants received the Truth; and this appears remarkable from what Luke, the facred hiftorian notices, namely, that the Samaritans, previous to his arrival, had been fome while feduced by the impoftures and inchantments of a notable forcerer, whofe name was Simon, and, in their aftonifhment and admiration, exclaimed, *This man is the great power of God*†! Having become followers of Chrift,

* John iv. 35.

† Simon Magus, or the Sorcerer, was a native of Gitton, a village in the country of Samaria. (*Epiphan. hæres.* 21. *and Juftin. Apolog.* 2. *p.* 69.) Hearing Philip preach, he took upon him the profeffion of Chriftianity, and was baptized. The Apoftles Peter and John, vifiting Samaria, communicated the Holy Ghoft to thofe baptized by Philip, at which Simon became ambitious of the fame honour, and propofed to buy it of them. But Peter faid to him, *Thy money perifh with thee,—thou art in the gall of bitternefs, and in the bond of iniquity.* From this ambitious and covetous propofal, the buying of fpiritual offices is called *Simony*; a practice that has too much prevailed among Chriftians. After being reproved by St. Peter, and his propofal rejected with horror, he fell into much greater falfehoods and abominations; applying himfelf more clofely to magic,

ſiah, for the ſins of mankind; and of his innocence, meekneſs, and patience under them, ſaid, *Underſtandeſt thou what thou readeſt?* With great courteſy he replied, *How can I, except ſome man ſhould guide me?* He then deſired Philip to aſcend the chariot and inſtruct him; which he did, and, taking the ſame ſcripture, *preached to him Jeſus.* The Eunuch forthwith embraced Chriſtianity, was baptized*, and, receiving the Holy Ghoſt, *went on his way rejoicing.* What a remarkable inſtance of providence and grace! On opening his book, the ſcripture, which informed him of the paſſion of Chriſt, preſented itſelf; and the Spirit of truth ſent Philip out of his way to meet him, who arrived juſt as he was reading it.

Having embraced Chriſtianity, he would, no doubt, exert himſelf to propagate it. Accordingly he is ſaid to have planted the Goſpel in Ethiopia, where, as moſt of the ancient hiſtories of that country aſſure us, there was a flouriſhing Church. The preaching there of the apoſtles Bartholomew, Matthew, and Matthias, is not only an additional proof that he had prepared the way for them; but alſo an evidence, that the ſucceſs of his miniſtry was conſiderable†.

After the converſion and baptiſm of the Eunuch, Philip was carried, moſt probably by an angel, to Azotus or rather Aſhdod, a city that was about thirty-four miles from Gaza, in the ſouthern part of the country, which had formerly been one of the five cities of the Philiſtines‡. From thence he paſſed through Joppa, Lydda, Saron, &c. towns near or upon the ſea-coaſt, and publiſhed the Goſpel all along, until he came to Cæſarea, then the metropolis of Paleſtine, where he probably ſettled; for many years after, St. Paul and his company found him there, (alſo four of his daughters, virgins, who were propheteſſes,) and lodged with him§.

* For the *place* where Philip baptized the Eunuch, ſee Fuller's Miſcel. Sacr. lib. 2. c. 8. Pearſon, Left. in Act. Apoſt. p. 72. and Reland's Paleſt. p. 487.

† See Euſeb. Eccles. Hiſt. lib. 2. cap. 1. Jortin's Remarks, vol. 2. p. 73. Some think there had been ſome knowledge of the true God in Ethiopia, from the Queen of Sheba's time, who made a tour to Jeruſalem, 846 miles, to ſee Solomon, whoſe fame ſpread far and wide.

‡ 1 Sam. vi. 17. § Acts xxi. 8, 9.

Perhaps he spent the following years in Tyre and Sidon, and the other Heathen cities, in the neighbourhood of Galilee, preaching the religion of Christ to both Jews and Gentiles, his house being at Cæsarea, a convenient situation for that purpose.

Saul, who like a furious beast of prey, having ravaged the Church*, by entering into every house, haling men and women, and committing them to prison; still breathed out threatenings and slaughter, and finding Jerusalem too narrow a stage for his malice and fury to act upon; also hearing this religion was successful, and that there were Christians at Damascus, the chief city of Syria, 130 miles, NNE. of Jerusalem; he desired of the High Priest letters of authority to the synagogues there, that if he found any professing the Christian name, whether men or women, he might seize and bring them bound to Jerusalem†. He readily procured what he desired, and seems to have been a proper person for executing those orders; being in the vigour of youth, having imbibed strong prepossessions in favour of the Mosaic dispensation, and possessing an intemperate zeal for Judaism. No doubt, the High Priest, (who seems to have been Caiaphas, the inveterate enemy of Christ) much applauded his zeal for extirpating this religion, and, having sealed his commission, dismissed him with wishes of success.

* This is the proper signification of ἐλυμαίνετο, which is often applied to the savages of the desert. *Wolfius and Mintert.*

† As Herod, who beheaded John the Baptist, was now in possession of Damascus, greater liberty would be granted the Jews than afterwards. This was a very ancient city of Syria in Asia, it was in being even in the time of Abraham, the birth-place of Eliezer his steward, *Gen.* xv. 2, and was supposed, by some of the ancients, to have been built by one Damascus, from whom it took its name; but the most generally received opinion is, that it was founded by Uz the eldest son of Aram; and it was for a long time the capital of a kingdom called Aram of Damascus. This monarchy proved very troublesome to the kingdom of Israel, and would even have destroyed it entirely, had not God miraculously interposed in its behalf. Julian styled it the *Eye of the whole East*, (Epist. 24.) It was destroyed by Tiglath Pileser, king of Assyria, and was never afterwards governed by its own kings. From the Assyrians and Babylonians it passed to the Persians, and from thence to the Greeks under Alexander the Great. After his death it belonged, with the rest of Syria, to the Selucidæ; till their empire was subdued by the Romans, about A. A. C. 70. and it is now in the hands of the Turks. *For a late account of it, see Maundrel's Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem, p.* 117—132.

He began his journey, with a fixed determination to uſe, to the utmoſt, the authority with which he was inveſted: but, when he came near Damaſcus, and his thoughts were much occupied on the work he was about to perform there, lo, Jeſus, whom he perſecuted, appeared to him, and, in a ſudden and miraculous manner, revealed himſelf as the true Meſſiah:—inſtantly the ravenous lion became a lamb, and the prodigy of nature a miracle of grace! He, who attempted to put out the light of divine truth, was deprived of corporeal ſight, and the hands of thoſe with him, that were to have bound the Saints, led him to Damaſcus. He continued blind for three days, during which he faſted and prayed. An important ſeaſon! his blindneſs would intimate to him the ſtate he had been in, impreſs him with a deeper ſenſe of the almighty power of Chriſt, and turn his thoughts inward, while he was leſs able to converſe with outward objects. In this ſtate of darkneſs and repentance, Ananias, directed by the Lord in a viſion, viſited him; and, by laying on his hands, opened his eyes; then, as the miniſter of his peace, ſaid, *And now why tarrieſt thou? ariſe, and be baptized, and waſh away thy ſins, calling on the name of the Lord.* Obedient to the heavenly meſſage, he immediately entered upon the open profeſſion of Chriſtianity*. This was, according to the beſt authorities, before the end of the year 36, or, at lateſt, early in the year 37.

He returned not to Jeruſalem, for inſtructions from the Apoſtles, but went directly into Arabia †; where he

* See *Lord* LYTTLETON's *Obſervations on the Converſion of St.* PAUL; a treatiſe to which *Infidelity* has never been able to fabricate a ſpecious anſwer.

† Arabia is a large country, extending from the river Euphrates to Egypt, and ſo lying to the eaſt and ſouth of the Holy Land. This country took its name from its inhabitants being a mingled people, *Jer.* xxv. 20. 24; compoſed of the Iſhmaelites, Madianites, and Amalekites; the word *Arab* denoting in the Hebrew language to *mix* or *mingle:* and the derivative Ereb or Arabim, a *mixed multitude.* The country has been from early times diſtinguiſhed into three parts, Arabia Felix, or the Happy, to the ſouth, ſo ſtyled from its rich products, and famous for the Queen of Sheba, who came to hear the wiſdom of Solomon, and whoſe kingdom was ſituated in this fertile country; Arabia Petræa, ſo called either from its capital Petra built on a rock, or from the rockineſs of the whole diviſion, being full of mountains, among which is Mount Sinai, or Horeb, ſo famous in ſacred Scripture. Not far from which, ſouth or ſouth-weſt, within the bounds of Arabia Petræa, was ſituated in the land of Madian, whither Moſes fled out of Egypt, *Acts* vii. 29, 30, and which was doubtleſs ſo called

might meet with believers, as there were Arabians among the Jews and proſelytes, who heard the apoſtle Peter's firſt ſermon after the deſcent of the Holy Spirit, many of whom embraced the faith of Jeſus Chriſt.-- It is conjectured, that his retirement was for ſerious meditation, and to receive the Goſpel immediately from Chriſt; who himſelf, before he entered upon his public miniſtry, withdrew into the wilderneſs of Judea. It is reaſonable to think, ſays Lardner ,that whilſt in Arabia, he was fully inſtructed, by ſpecial revelation, in the doctrine preached by Jeſus Chriſt,—in all the things ſaid and done by him,—in his ſufferings, crucifixion, reſurrection, and aſcenſion,--the fulfilment of the ancient prophecies in Jeſus; and received alſo the Holy Ghoſt, in a meaſure equal to that of other Apoſtles. Whereby he was qualified to preach the Goſpel, teſtify the reſurrection of Jeſus, and prove him to be the Chriſt, without receiving either inſtruction or gifts from other apoſtles*.

After ſtaying three years in Arabia, he returned to Damaſcus, and, being furniſhed with gifts, ſtraightway preached in the ſynagogues, maintaining that Jeſus is the Son of God. The Jews attempted to diſprove the truth of what he advanced; but he, being increaſed in faith and courage, by ſtrength of arguments, from the literal and exact fulfilment of the prophecies in that Jeſus whom he preached, confounded and ſilenced his antagoniſts. Not ſatisfied merely with rejecting his doctrine, they conſulted how to take away his life; for they viewed him as a grand apoſtate, whoſe converſion conſiderably aided the cauſe of Chriſtianity. To accompliſh their deſign, they applied to the Governor, whoſe reſidence was in the city, to apprehend him, and by a falſe repreſentation, gained him over to them; but this being known to the Apoſtle, the Diſciples, by

from Madian, a ſon of Abraham by Keturah. As Arabia Petræa lies to the north of Arabia Felix, ſo ſtill more north, or rather north-eaſt, lies the third diviſion, called, from its natural barrenneſs, Arabia Deſerta. This reaches up to the very neighbourhood of Damaſcus; and therefore it is not to be queſtioned, but that it was the peculiar part of Arabia, into which St. Paul retired after his converſion. *Wells's Geography.*

* Biſhop Watſon's Collection of Theological Tracts, vol. 2. p. 200.

night, through a window of a houſe, which probably ſtood on the wall of the city, let him down in a large baſket, ſuſpended by a rope, and ſo he eſcaped his hands*.

Having heard that Peter, the apoſtle of the circumciſion was at Jeruſalem, he went thither, and abode with him fifteen days. During this time he ſaw none of the other Apoſtles, *ſave James the Lord's brother*†, that is, according to the Hebrew idiom, his near kinſman. This James was the ſon of Alpheus, the Virgin Mary ſiſter's huſband; ſo that he was our Lord's firſt couſin. He was called James the *Juſt* for his eminent piety, and James the *Leſs* probably by reaſon of his low ſtature. He had a conſiderable ſhare in the management of the Chriſtian Church in general, and a greater than any in that at Jeruſalem. While with them, Peter boldly preached the Chriſtian faith, and defended the ſame in his diſputations with the Helleniſt Jews: theſe had been born in Greece and other Gentile countries, and their ſynagogues or colleges were at Jeruſalem. He diſputed with them, as he had done with thoſe at Damaſcus, and proved that Jeſus, whom he formerly had perſecuted, and they ſtill oppoſed, was the promiſed Meſſiah, and, no doubt, confounded them as he had the others, by ſtrength of argument. They were much enraged againſt him; becauſe he was himſelf a Helleniſt Jew, born at Tarſus in Cilicia, and had been a champion for their Cauſe, but now deſerted them; therefore *they went about to ſlay him.* It is a bad cauſe that has recourſe to perſecution and murder when argument fails. The Chriſtians at Jeruſalem, having notice of their deſign, carefully preſerved

* At this time Damaſcus belonged to Aretas, king of Arabia, whoſe dominions were tributary to the Romans. Herod had married Aretas's daughter, and put her away from him, to take Herodias, his brother Philip's wife: this treatment of his daughter greatly incenſed Aretas. Some time after that, there happened a diſpute between Herod and Aretas, concerning their boundaries in *Gamala*: which occaſioned a battle, and ended in the death of Herod, whoſe army was utterly routed. After this victory, probably the Jews would have but little intereſt within the dominions of Aretas, and rather be ſuſpected and watched by him. And to prevail with the deputy-Governor in Damaſcus to take Paul, poſſibly the Jews pretended he was a ſpy from Herod, and an enemy to the Arabians.

† Gal. i. 19.

him, as the Christians at Damascus had done: and conducted him in safety to Cæsarea; from thence they sent him forth, probably by sea, to Tarsus*, where among his friends he might be out of danger, and preach the word of life. His leaving Jerusalem, at this time, was by special direction from the Lord, who said, *Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me: I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles*†.

Pilate was removed from his government in Judea before the Passover in the year 36, probably five or six months sooner, in September or October, A. D. 35, about a year and a half before the death of Tiberias, in a very ignominious manner, by Vitellius, president of Syria. After which, during the remaining part of

* Tarsus seems to have taken its name from Tarshish, the son of Javan, *Gen.* x. 4, and to have been first founded by him, or some of his descendants, who so called it in honour of their great progenitor. From the Hebrew name Tarshish, the Heathen derived the common name Tarsus. Javan settled in these parts, afterwards called Cilicia, being the south-east country of Asia-Minor, and lying on the northern coast at the east-end of the Mediterranean Sea. This was most probably the Tarshish to which the prophet Jonah thought to *flee from the presence of the Lord*, *Jon.* i. 3. Tarsus stands in a plain on the banks of the river Cydnus, and was all along in ancient times a great trading and rich town; its *ships* were numerous, and it is mentioned often by the Prophets, on account of its trading with Tyre. It was of such note in the time of the Roman empire, that it was not only made the metropolis of Cilicia, but peculiarly honoured with the privileges of a Roman colony. In the time of St. Paul, it had an academy, the most celebrated in the world; Strabo scruples not to say of the very eminent men in it, that they excelled in all parts of polite learning and philosophy even those of Athens and Alexandria! and Rome itself got from this nursery of learning some of its best professors. Hence St. Paul, being educated in Grecian learning in the schools of Tarsus, became so fully instructed in the liberal arts and sciences, and so well acquainted with Heathen authors. In his writings he quotes several Greek poets, Aratus, Acts. xi. 28. Menander, 1 Cor. xv. 33. Epimenides, Tit. i. 12. Having gone through a course of liberal education in this city, he travelled abroad, as Strabo says the students of Tarsus did, to perfect himself in other branches of useful learning. He removed to Jerusalem to study under Gamaliel, an eminent Jewish doctor, under whose tuition he made an uncommon proficiency in the knowledge of the law and the acquisition of rabbinical literature. Some think Tarsus obtained the privileges of a *Roman* colony, by its firm adherence to *Julius Cæsar*, which made the inhabitants citizens of Rome, whence St. *Paul* was free of *Rome*, by being born in *Tarsus*. Others maintain that Tarsus, though a free city, was not a *Roman* colony, in the time of St. *Paul*; and that no trace is found of this on the medals, before the reign of *Caracella*, or *Heliogabalus*; therefore, the privilege of being a citizen of *Rome* belonged to the Apostle, not as being a denizen of *Tarsus*, but by some personal right derived from his father or ancestors. *Well's Geography, vol.* 1. *p.* 65. vol. 2. p. 237. *Harwood's Introduction to the New Test. vol.* 1. *p.* 144.—147. *Calmet's Dictionary.*

† Acts xxii. 17—22.

the reign of Tiberias, and in that of Caius, there was no Procurator, nor other perſon, that had the power of life and death in Judea, until the acceſſion of Herod Agrippa, in the year 41. In that ſpace of time, the Jews would take an uncommon licence, and gratify their malicious diſpoſitions, beyond what they could otherwiſe have done, without control, and be extremely troubleſome to the Diſciples of Jeſus*.

Not long after Paul's departure from theſe parts, the churches planted throughout Judea, Samaria, and Galilee, by Philip, and others that were ſcattered abroad from Jeruſalem, by the perſecution which aroſe about Stephen, *had reſt and were edified: and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghoſt, were multiplied.* The perſecution, which began at the death of Stephen, near the end of the year 35, or beginning of 36, had continued until now, a ſpace of about four years; and the beſt commentators ſeem agreed, that this repoſe of the Church was occaſioned by a general alarm given to the Jews, then the ſole perſecutors of the Chriſtians, about A. D. 40, when Vitellius, who had gratified them to the uttermoſt of his power, was recalled, and Petronius, by order of Caligula, who was incenſed by ſome affront ſaid to have been given him by the Alexandrian Jews, attempted to bring the ſtatue of that emperor among them, and to ſet it up, with the name of Jupiter inſcribed upon it, in the *Holy of Holies;* the emperor enjoining him to put to death all who made any reſiſtance, and make the reſt of the nation ſlaves.

* Lardner's Jewiſh and Heathen Teſtimonies, vol. 1. p. 325.

† Philo ſays, that the tidings of this order having reached Jeruſalem, the Jews, abandoning their cities, villages, and the open countries, all went to Patronius in Phœnicia; both men and women, old and young, and middle-aged. Patronius's friends, at a diſtance, took them for a large army; but, when they came nearer, found it was only an unarmed, lamenting multitude. When they came within ſight of Patronius, who was ſeated upon an eminence, they threw themſelves down upon the ground before him, with weeping and lamentation: and, when he ordered them to riſe, they approached him with their heads covered with duſt, and their hands behind them, like men condemned to die; and then the Senate addreſſed him in this manner: "We come to you, Sir, as you ſee, unarmed; we have brought with us our wives, children, and relations; and throw ourſelves down before you, as at the feet of Caius; having left none at home, that you may ſave all, or deſtroy all," &c. with much more

The Apoſtles, availing themſelves of this ſeaſon of reſt and peace, would, as may reaſonably be thought, labour much, and with ſucceſs: the ſhining holineſs, and amiable cheerfulneſs of the Chriſtians, would have a happy effect upon others, and invite them to become ſuch. We are to look for the counterpart of the Chriſtian religion in the lives of thoſe who profeſs it, and of which their regular and circumſpect conduct is a powerful recommendation. God reſtrained the wrath of men, and gave this lucid interval to his perſecuted followers, a calm after a ſtorm, leſt the ſpirit ſhould fail before him, and the ſouls which he had made. It is the duty of the Church to improve her ſeaſons of peace and tranquillity to her own ſpiritual edification, and thus prepare for new ſtorms. The cleareſt ſky may ſoon be covered with clouds, and when moſt ſerene ſuddenly rendered terrific by the jarring of oppoſite elements.—Thus we ſee how the Doctrine of Chriſt was promulgated and prevailed; even within the ſpace of ſix years, from the time of his aſcenſion.

During this peaceful interval, St. Peter travelled throughout all parts of the Holy Land, to confirm the doctrine which Philip and others had preached, confer the Holy Ghoſt on thoſe converts who were judged proper to be employed in the public offices of religion, ordain miniſters, and regulate any other affairs in the Church, as he ſaw occaſion. As well as in other places, he viſited the Saints who dwelt at Lydda*, which

to the ſame purpoſe: in which they repeated profeſſions of love of their temple and laws, more than of their lives;—and all which they expreſſed with tears, and all the ſigns of anguiſh and diſtreſs. Petronius, out of compaſſion, deferred executing his commiſſion: and to ſatisfy Caligula, who intended being at Alexandria the following ſummer, he wrote to him, that the alarm his commiſſion had occaſioned among the Jews, was ſo great, that they were in danger of neglecting the harveſt, and the cultivation of their lands, ariſing from their ſolicitude for the purity of their religion; and he judged it improper to do any thing that might prevent a ſufficient plenty for thoſe who would follow him from Italy, the Princes of Aſia, and other great men in thoſe parts. See Lardner's Credibility, p. 1. b. 1. c. 2. §. 12. and Benſon's Hiſtory of the Firſt Planting of Chriſtianity, vol. 1. p. 206—208.

* Lud or Lod, in Hebrew, or by the Greeks and Latins called Lydda, or Dioſpolis, *the City of Jupiter*, ſeems to have been inhabited by the Benjamites, at the return of the Jews from the Babyloniſh captivity. Neh. ii. 35. It is one of the three toparchies which were diſmembered from Samaria, and given to the Jews. (*Mac.* ii. 34. Joſeph. Antiq. lib. 14. cap. 8.) It was famous for a

was a conſiderable town of Phœnicia, ſituated in the tribe of Ephraim, lying between Azotus and Cæſarea, and about thirty-two miles weſt of Jeruſalem. Here he met with a man called Eneas, who, by a palſy, had been eight years confined to his bed; and, feeling the miraculous power, he, in the name of Jeſus Chriſt, perfectly cured him; ſo that, at his command, he aroſe, and, as a proof that he was reſtored, made his own bed! The greater part of thoſe, healed by Chriſt and his Apoſtles, was afflicted with chronical diſeaſes, incurable by the medicinal art, ſo that the power might evidently appear to be of God: and this was notorious alſo, from theſe cures being performed in an inſtant; for nature and art work by degrees, and bring nothing to perfection immediately. This miracle was wrought, not ſolely for the relief and comfort of Eneas, but, for the benefit of the people in that country alſo. The inhabitants of Lydda and Saron*, ſeeing him perfectly reſtored, and hearing that it was done by the power of Chriſt, were ſo convinced of the truth of Chriſtianity, that they turned from Judaiſm, and became Chriſtians.

Among the Chriſtians at Joppa, twelve miles from Lydda, there was a noted woman, probably an Helleniſt Jeweſs, known among the Hebrews by the Syriac name Tabitha, while the Greeks called her in their own language Dorcas: both words are of the ſame import, and ſignify a Roe or Fawn. It appears ſhe was poſſeſſed of property, and that her piety diſpoſed her

college of the Jews, which produced many celebrated Rabbis; and the great Sanhedrim ſometimes met near it. After the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, the Jews ſet up ſeveral academies in different places of Paleſtine, and in particular at Lydda, where the great Akiba was a profeſſor for ſome time. Gamaliel ſucceeded him, and was obliged to retire to Japhna. After them followed Taſpho or Trypho, another renowned Rabbin, who has been confounded with Trypho the Jew, mentioned in Juſtin's dialogue. *Calmet's Dictionary.*

* There were three diſtricts of Paleſtine called Saron, or Sharon, or Sarona: which name was almoſt proverbial, to expreſs a place of extraordinary beauty and fruitfulneſs. This Saron is the name of a large, fruitful, and well-inhabited valley, which lay near Lydda, and is ſaid to have extended from Mount Tabor to the ſea of Tiberias, and from Cæſarea to Joppa, in which were many villages; and it was noted for its delightful ſituation, and the fine paſture it afforded for their flocks.—*Compare* 1 *Chron.* xxvii. 29; *Iſa.* xxxiii. 9; xxxv. 2; lxv. 10.

to employ it in works of charity. She did not spend her time and estate in making rich apparel for herself, but convenient clothing for the indigent, which is a commanded act of charity:---an indictment against some at the Last Day will be, that, although they had full wardrobes, they suffered the poor to go naked: *I was naked, and ye clothed me not**. This good and useful woman died, on which occasion, it was not necessary to hire mourning women, as was usual among the Jews, for many real mourners present truly lamented their loss.

Hearing of the miraculous cure of Eneas, the paralytic, her Christian friends sent two men to Peter, desiring that he would immediately come to them, at Joppa†. He readily complied: and was led into an upper chamber where the corpse lay; and all the disconsolate widows stood by him, weeping; and shewed the coats and garments (some probably on their backs, and others ready for the distressed poor,) which she had benevolently made. Having put all the company out of the room, (to avoid ostentation and vain glory, and that he might not be disturbed in his addresses to God, by the lamentations of relatives and friends) he reverently kneeled down, and, conscious that nothing short of a divine aid could raise her to life, prayed; and then, turning to the body, (no doubt in the name of Christ,) said, *Tabitha, arise!*---and the Redeemer's power attended the word of his servant, and effected the miracle. At once she recovered both life and

* Matt. xxv. 54.

† Joppa is a sea-port town of Palestine, lying south of Cæsarea; and antiently the only port to Jerusalem, whence all the materials sent from Tyre towards the building of Solomon's temple were brought hither and landed. (2 *Chron.* ii. 16.) It is said to have been built by Japhet, and from him to have taken its name *Japho*, afterwards moulded into *Joppa*; and even the heathen geographers speak of it as built before the flood. It is now called *Jaffa* by the Turks, somewhat nearer to its first appellation. Here it was that the prophet Jonas took shipping for Tarshish, when he would have declined delivering the message he had received from the Lord, to prophecy against Ninevah for its wickedness. (*Jon.* i. 3.) It is 50 miles N W. of Jerusalem, or according to others only 27: and 100 from Acre. It was taken by the French under Bonaparte, in Feb. 1799, but since retaken and fortified. On the 30th of Sept. 1800, the foundation stone of a new fort was laid by the Grand Vizier, assisted by several British engineers; on which occasion five sheep were sacrificed, and the blood sprinkled on the stone.

strength for the moment her eyes, which death had closed, and gave similar demonstration that she had returned to life. Peter gave her his hand, and lifted her up: not because she needed his help, but as a token of welcoming her to life again: then, calling in the company, he presented her alive, to their great comfort.—Thus was magnified the miracle of Dorcas, says Eusebius, when called back to life by her friends, when they saw her alive! For the sake of themselves, and of the poor, there was cause of rejoicing; and much more for such a confirmation of the Gospel. Yet to herself it was matter of mournful joy, to be called back to these scenes of vanity: but doubtless her remaining days were all more manfully spent in the service of her Saviour and her God. This was a richer reward, and up for her in heaven, and she afterwards returned to a more exceeding weight of glory, than that from which a strengthening providence had recalled her for a season*.

This was the eighth instance of persons, after they had really been dead, restored to life. 1. The widow's son of Sarepta, a city of the Sidonians, situated in Phœnicia, between Tyre and Sidon, upon the coast of the Mediterranean Sea; with whom the prophet Elijah had lodged, while there was a severe famine in the land of Israel†. 2. The Shunamite's son, who entertained the prophet Elisha when at Shunem, a city belonging to the tribe of Issachar, and, according to Eusebius, five miles from Tabor towards the south‡. 3. The dead man, by the Moabites cast into the sepulchre of Elisha, when they invaded the land§. 4. Jairus's little daughter, the ruler of the synagogue, perhaps at Capernaum, a city on the coast of the sea of Galilee, in the borders of Zebulon and Nephthalim‖. 5. The widow's son of Nain, a city of Palestine, and, according to Eusebius, two miles from Tabor, towards the south¶. 6. Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha**. 7. Christ himself was raised from the dead. 8.

* Family Expositor. † Kings xvii. 19. ‡ 2 Kings iv. 32; Josh. xix. 18.
§ 2 Kings xiii. 21. ‖ Mark v. 42; Matt. ix. 15.
¶ Luke vii. 11—15. ** John xi. 44.

And now Tabitha; beſide thoſe who roſe when our Saviour did, went into Jeruſalem, and appeared to many*. Theſe examples prove, that the general reſurrection of the dead, ſo much ſpoken of in the Scriptures, and believed by Chriſtians, is poſſible, which the Heathen believed not. Indeed it muſt neceſſarily appear altogether impoſſible, that any other than the true God could raiſe the dead; though not that he is able to do it, who is a being of infinite wiſdom, almighty power, and abſolute dominion; and can work through all the difficulties, and conquer all the impoſſibilities which reaſon can ſuggeſt againſt it. Chriſtians believe the reſurrection of the dead on the unqueſtionable veracity of God's own teſtimony, without attempting to adjuſt his conduct to their own inquiſitive reaſonings concerning it.

Hitherto the preaching of the Goſpel had been confined to Jews, to Jewiſh proſelytes, and to Samaritans. It was not yet known to the Apoſtles, ſays archdeacon Paley, that they were at liberty to propoſe the religion to mankind at large. That *myſtery*, as St. Paul calls it, and as it then was, was revealed to Peter by an eſpecial miracle, while at Joppa, in the houſe of one Simon, a tanner by trade, where he lodged. At the ſixth hour, anſwering to our twelve o'clock, he went upon the houſe top, (which, according to the cuſtom in the eaſtern countries, was flat-roofed, with battlements about it,) to pray; and choſe this retired place, to avoid being obſerved, and guard againſt diſtraction in that ſolemn duty. 'And he became hungry, and would have taken a little refreſhment: but while they in the lower apartments were preparing food, he fell into an ecſtaſy of contemplation, in which his ſenſes were locked up, and his ſoul was as if it had been ſeparated from his body. Thus abſtracted from the world, he ſaw ſomething in the form of a great ſheet, knit at the four corners, deſcending from heaven to the place where he was; in which was contained all manner of animals that creep on the earth, or fly in the air: and a voice ſaid to him, *Riſe, Peter; kill, and eat*, freely without diſtinction.

* Matt. xxvii. 52, 53.

But he, retaining his Jewiſh prejudices, objected, ſaying, *Not ſo, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common and unclean.* The voice ſpake to him a ſecond time, *What God hath cleanſed, that call not thou common.* This was repeated thrice, and then the ſheet containing the living creatures, was received up into heaven.—The deſign of this viſion was to ſhow that the ceremonial diſtinction between clean and unclean meats was aboliſhed,—that the partition wall between Jews and Gentiles was broken down,—that the latter were to be called into the Church,—that he ſhould preach the Goſpel to them as well as to the Jews, and that as many of either as would ſincerely believe in Chriſt, ſhould at laſt be received into heaven. Religious prejudices, as well as common facts, are ſtubborn things; but ſoon after this, Peter was ſo enlarged in his views, and in his liberality, that he declared, *I now at length perceive, that God has not confined his mercies to a particular nation only; but that all are capable of inheriting the promiſes in Chriſt Jeſus, who are duly prepared by righteouſneſs and the fear of God**.

He was no ſooner prepared to preach to the Gentiles, than three men arrived, ſent by a captain called Cornelius, (a famous name among the Romans, eſpecially in the families of the Scipios and Syllas,) to invite him to go into Cæſarea†. After telling him, that the Centurion had been warned from the Almighty, by an holy angel, to ſend for him to his houſe, to hear him diſcourſe, he conſented: and, lodging the meſſengers that night, the next day he went along with them, and ſix Jewiſh

* See Biſhop Sherlock's Sermon on Acts x. 34, 35.

† Not Cæſarea Philippi, (mentioned *Matt.* xvi. 13.) but Cæſarea in Paleſtine, (formerly called *Stratonice*, or the Tower of Straton) built by Herod the Great, and, in honour of Cæſar Auguſtus, called Cæſarea. The ſituation, for trade and other conveniences, was ſuch, that, when the Romans reduced Judea into the form of a province, they made it the ſeat of government, in preference even to Jeruſalem itſelf, and their governor or proconſul reſided there. *(See Joſeph. Antiq. b.* 13. *c.* 11. *and Macknight's Harmony, Sect.* 17.*)* Joſephus ſays it was ſix hundred furlongs, or about twenty-five leagues, from Jeruſalem. The buildings were all of marble, private houſes as well as palaces; but the maſter-piece was the Port, which was made large as the Piræus at Athens. The old harbour was ſo bad, that no ſhips could be ſafe therein, when the wind was at S W. but the new one, made in the form of a half-moon, and ſufficiently large to contain a royal navy, was the moſt convenient of any on that coaſt. Herod, who ſpared neither money nor pains, was twelve years in completing

Chriſtians from Joppa accompanied him; this he judged prudent, that they might be witneſſes of what ſhould happen, as this was an affair in which ſome difficulties were likely to ariſe.

He found a people prepared for the Lord; for Cornelius had called together his relations and intimate friends, who alſo were *devout Gentiles*; and, after introducing Peter, in the moſt reſpectable manner, into his houſe, and informing him how he was directed to ſend for him, he ſaid, *Now therefore are we all here preſent before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.* He immediately preached the Goſpel to them, and God, while he was ſpeaking, poured down the Holy Ghoſt, in his miraculous gifts, as well as ſanctifying influences, as he had done on the Apoſtles, and their company, on the day of Pentecoſt. From this he inferred, that as they were baptized with the Spirit, they had a right to Chriſtian baptiſm, and therefore, by that inſtitution, received them into the Church. This appears to have been about ſeven years after Chriſt's aſcenſion.

About a year after this, we find ſeveral of the great inſtruments employed in propagating Chriſtianity, (who had been ſcattered abroad upon the perſecution that aroſe about Stephen,) in Gentile countries and cities. They travelled as far as Phenice, the country about Tyre; Antioch, a famous city in Syria: and Cyprus, an iſland in the Mediterranean; and many other places. Some of them were Jewiſh Chriſtians of Cyprus, and of the country of Cyrene, in Africa.

The ſucceſs of the Goſpel in Antioch* was ſuch, that the language uſed by the ſacred Hiſtorian, to ſet it

the whole of his plan. But at this time, Cæſar Auguſtus, after whom the city was named, was dead; and Caius Caligula was emperor. So fleeting is the glory of this world!—When Cæſarea is named, *(ſays Calmet,)* as a city of Paleſtine, without the addition of *Philippi*, we ſuppoſe this Cæſarea to be meant. Euſebius, the learned hiſtorian was born here, and was biſhop of this city at the beginning of the fourth century, and of the reign of Conſtantine the Great.

* This was Antioch in Syria, ſituated on both ſides of the river Orontes, (mentioned by Strabo and other ancient writers) about twelve miles from the ſhore of the Mediterranean Sea, and two hundred and eighty north of Jeruſalem. It was one of the three moſt famous cities in the world,—Rome in Italy, Alexandria in Egypt, and then this Antioch in Syria. It was built by Seleucus Nicanor,

forth, is, *the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.* The hand is the inſtrument of working, and here, as applied to God, means that his power aſſiſted them in diſpenſing his word, and made it efficacious to the hearers. The Church at Jeruſalem hearing of this, ſent Barnabas, *who, when he came, and had ſeen the grace of God,* manifeſted in the converſions already among this uncircumciſed people, *was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpoſe of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.* Indeed he was a proper man to be ſent among thoſe converts, for he was not only born on Gentile ground, but poſſeſſed great piety, zeal and knowledge, benignity and ſweetneſs of temper, which are eſſential qualifications for a miniſter of Chriſt, and would render him acceptable and uſeful: and ſo we read, that, after his arrival, *much people,* (or *a multitude,* as it is in the original) *was added to the Lord.* What an acquiſition to any people is a paſtor of ſuch a ſpirit!

Believers having become numerous, he went to Tarſus to ſeek Paul, who had now been there near three years, that he might aſſiſt him in the miniſtry; and, after arriving at Antioch, they continued together a whole year, *and taught much people.* Beſides Barnabas and Paul, we find among the Antiochean miniſters, Simeon, who, to diſtinguiſh him from others of the

the firſt king of Syria after Alexander the Great, and called Antioch in memory of his father Antiochus, in the year 301 before the Chriſtian æra; and was, after that, the royal ſeat of the ſucceeding kings of Syria. There were twelve cities, ſays Strabo, called Antioch, one in Syria, one in Meſopotamia, one in Arabia, and the reſt in Aſia the Leſs; and, to diſtinguiſh it from all others of the ſame name, this was called by ſome *Antiochia Epidaphne.* It took this additional name from its being in the neighbourhood of Daphne, one of the moſt delightful groves in the world, in the midſt of which ſtood the famous temple of Apollo. In the flouriſhing times of the Roman empire, it was the ordinary reſidence of the præfect or governor of the eaſtern provinces, and was alſo honoured with the reſidence of ſeveral of the emperors, eſpecially of Verus and Valens, who ſpent here the greateſt part of their time. The emperor Veſpaſian, Titus, and others, granted very great privileges to it. Among Chriſtians it is alſo famous, for being the native place of Luke the Evangeliſt, of Theophilus, hence ſurnamed Antiochenus, and for its celebrated biſhop, Ignatius the Martyr. In the early ages of Chriſtianity, its biſhop had the title of Patriarch: but being taken by the Saracens, afterwards by the Turks, it began to decay, and is now in ſo deſolate and ruinous a condition, that he has long ſince removed to Damaſcus.

same name, was called *Niger* the black: also Lucius, of Cyrene, whom Origen and Dr. Lightfoot think was Luke the Evangelist; but others, that he was another person, as Luke is generally thought to have been born at Antioch; but, to obviate this objection, the aforesaid authors say, he was educated in the Cyrenean College at Jerusalem: and Manaen, who was either the Foster-brother, or had been educated at the same time and under the same tutor, or had been the constant and intimate companion and favourite at court, of Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee. By which it appears that he was a person of rank and distinction, and, like Moses, contemning the pleasures of the court, had embraced Christianity, and thought it no disparagement to be a preacher thereof.

We shall remark, as it is worthy our attention, that *the Disciples were called* CHRISTIANS *first in Antioch*, —The Jewish converts had hitherto been called, by their enemies, *Galileans*, *Nazarenes*, and such like names, by way of contempt and reproach: and, among themselves, *Saints*, from their holiness; *Disciples*, from learning of Christ; *Believers*, from believing in him as the Messiah; and *Brethren*, from their mutual love, and relation to God and each other. But now these Gentile converts were called by the name of *Christians*, immediately from CHRIST: just as among the philosophers, the *Platonists*, *Pythagoreans*, &c. were denominated from their several masters. Interpreters conclude, from the original Greek word, by our translators rendered *called*, that the name was given by *divine appointment**, and also was the accomplishment of an old prophecy, which foretold that the Church should *be*

* χρηματίσαι signifies, *to be warned by a divine admonition*, (see Matt. ii. 12. Luke ii. 26. Acts x. 22;) and accordingly Doddridge renders it, *were called by divine appointment*. Dr. Mill has informed us, that the Cambridge M S. reads this sentence thus: *and then they first named by divine appointment*, εχρηματισαν *the disciples* CHRISTIANS *in Antioch*; whereby is signified, that Barnabas and Saul first gave them the name of *Christians*; and indeed the common reading fairly rendered, (says a commentator) seems to intimate the same thing: *and it came to pass that they assembled, &c. and that they called the first disciples at Antioch by the name of Christians.*—Witsius thinks it a circumstance of remarkable wisdom, that this celebrated name should arise from *Antioch*, a church consisting of a mixture of Jews and Gentiles, rather than from Jerusa-

*called by a new name**. This Catholic name was calculated to prevent all diſtinctions, and to conſolidate all the members under its influence. The name *Gentile* was odious to the Jews, and that of *Jew* to the Gentiles. The denomination *Chriſtian* includes both in one common and agreeable appellation; and imports their equally partaking of the anointing wherewith Chriſt himſelf was anointed.——This Chriſtian Church at Antioch was conſidered the mother-church of the Gentiles, as that of Jeruſalem was of the Jewiſh, or of all the Chriſtian churches; and was ſometimes called *the Jeruſalem of the Gentiles.*

About this time Herod Agrippa, ſon of Ariſtobulus, grandſon of Herod the Great, nephew of Herod Antipas (who beheaded the Baptiſt,) brother to Herodias, and father to that Agrippa, before whom Paul afterwards made his defence; ſtretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. He cut off the head of James, the brother of John, with the ſword: theſe were the ſons of Zebedee. Our Saviour ſtyled them Boanerges, that is, ſons of thunder; probably, becauſe James was a zealous preacher, and thundered againſt the vices of the times, Herod killed him. And ſeeing that his bloody conduct pleaſed the unbelieving Jews, he proceeded to take Peter alſo: this was about the beginning of April, and moſt probably in the third year of Claudius Cæſar, who granted him the whole kingdom of his grandfather, Herod the Great. He confined the Apoſtle, and, that he might not eſcape, delivered him to four quaternions of ſoldiers, that is, ſixteen, conſiſting of four in each party, who watched him alternately; two of them being chained to him, and the other two walking before the door of the priſon: intending after Eaſter, or rather after the Paſſover, (ſo it is in the original, and ſo it ſhould have been tranſlated) to bring him forth to the peo-

lem, dignified in ſo many other reſpects, and that it was a kind of victory gained over Satan, who, from Antioch ſome ages before, had raiſed ſo many cruel perſecutors of the church of God. (*See his Life of Paul, Chap.* 3. *Sec.* 5.) See ſome excellent thoughts on the Sacred Import of the Chriſtian Name, in *Preſident Davies's* 18*th Sermon.*

* Iſa. lxii. 2; and lxv. 15.

ple, and, at their desire, put him to death. But prayer was made without ceasing by the Church to God for him, and the very night before Herod intended bringing him forth, he was delivered out of prison by the ministry of an Angel, and saved from death. Herod did not long survive this; for the angel of the Lord smote him with a loathsome disease, and he became worm eaten*, like a piece of rotten wood, and gave up the ghost in extreme misery, in the fifty-fourth year of his age, and the seventh of his reign; reckoning from the time of his first advancement by Caligula, to the tetrarchy of his uncle Philip, being the fourth year of the Emperor Claudius, A. D. 44. On his death, it is observed, that *the word of God grew and multiplied*, as seed sown, which grows up with the increase of thirty, sixty, and a hundred fold.

Cyprus†, already mentioned, was anciently called Macaria, one of the happy islands, which was dedicated

* The word σκωληκόβρωτος signifies in the general *consumed with vermin*, and may express the disease called *morbus pedicularis*, says Doddridge, from Beza and Elsner. Several persecutors of the people of God have died the same death. His Grandfather, Herod the Great, Josephus owns had a putrefaction producing worms. (*Antiq. lib. c.* 8.) We read of Antiochus Epiphanes, the great persecutor of the Jews and profaner of their Temple, that worms sprang out of the body of this wicked man. (2 *Maccab.* ix. 8, 9.) Tertullian mentions of one Claudius Herminianus, a persecutor of the Christians, that while alive worms crept from him. (*In Scap.* c. 3.) So it was with Maximinus, who published a proclamation, engraven on brass, for utterly abolishing the Christian religion. (*Euseb. lib.* 8. c. 16.) Herod Agrippa left issue, namely, *Agrippa*, a son, then seventeen years old, before whom St. Paul afterwards made an apology for Christianity: *Berenice*, sixteen years of age, who was married to Herod king of Chalcis, his father's brother: and *Drusilla*, who became wife to Felix the governor: as well as *Mariamne*, who is not mentioned in the Scripture. After Herod's death, the kingdom was again reduced to a province.

† Cyprus is situated in the Levant, or most easterly part of the Mediterranean Sea, between 33° and 36° lon. E. and 30° and 34° lat. N. It is 220 miles long, 65 broad, and about 600 in circumference. The name by which it was most generally known is *Cyprus*, said to be derived from *Cypros*, a shrub or tree with which the island abounded; supposed by some to be the Cypress, by others that which is called the *privet*, which bears a little white flower with a very pleasant smell. The first inhabitants were, in all probability, the posterity of Kittim, (*Joseph. Antiq. lib.* 1. c. 7.) the brother of Tarshish, and son of Javan; the city, called Citium by the Romans, preserving the name of the first planter for many ages after. It was divided among several petty kings, until Cyrus the Great made them tributary. Probably they submitted to Alexander the Great, though historians are silent as to that event: but it is certain the whole island did to Antigonus about A. A. C. 304. Eleven years afterwards, Ptolemy took it, and it was quietly possessed by him and his descendants till A. A. C. 58; when it was seized by the Romans. In 648, it was conquered by the Saracens; but

to Venus: the Heathen inhabitants lived in eafe and fenfual pleafures, and indulged in abominable vices in the worfhip of that goddefs. To this Pagan ifland, God fent Barnabas and Paul, to fpeak the glad tidings of falvation to the grofsly ignorant and wicked inhabitants; and, as it was not far from Judea, it abounded with Jews: this was an excurfion by fea and land of nearly 150 miles. After the Minifters at Antioch had laid their hands upon them, they departed to Seleucia, a city a little to the north-weft of Antioch, upon the river Orontes, five miles from the place where it falls into the Mediterranean Sea, and fo named from its founder Seleucus Nicator. From hence they fet fail for Cyprus, which lies in a wefterly direction; and is reputed to be diftant from the main land of Syria about one hundred miles, and about fixty from Cilicia. The firft place they arrived at was Salamis, one of the moft confiderable cities in Cyprus, fituated on the eaftern extremity, and the neareft port to Syria: it is now called Famacufta. Here they entered into the fynagogues of the Jews and preached the word of God. Though they were commiffioned to preach to the Gentiles, yet they always made the firft offer of the Gofpel to the Jews of the difperfion, fo that thofe among them, who received it not, were inexcufable. They had John Mark along with them, who was employed as occafion required.

From thence they went to Paphos, a city on the weftern extremity, and, as may be feen in Tacitus, famous among the Heathen for the temple and obfcene worfhip of the Paphian Venus. It was alfo, under the Romans, the feat of the Proconful, who at that time was Sergius Paulus, a prudent man, well fkilled in civil affairs, acting with propriety and caution, and difpofed to receive and obey the truth. Having heard

recovered by the Romans in 957. In the time of the Crufades, it was reduced by Richard the Firft, of England, who gave it to the princes of the Lufignan family, who held it till A. D. 1570, when it was taken by the Turks, and ever fince has continued under their tyrannical yoke. When they conquered it, they reckoned 70,000 fighting men, befides old men, women, and children; and now the whole inhabitants fcarcely amount to 40,000. Such are the effects of defpotifm.

of Barnabas and Paul, and of their doctrine at Salamis, when they arrived at Paphos, he ſent for them, as Cornelius had done for Peter, and deſired to hear the word of God; which proved the means of his own converſion. They found alſo with him, a ſorcerer, one aſſiſted by the devil in magical arts. The name he had aſſumed was Barjeſus, or the ſon of Jeſus, but his real one was Elymas, which in the Arabic tongue ſignifies Magian, taken probably from the country Elymais, a part of Perſia, the place for magicians or ſorcerers. When this magical Jew underſtood that Sergius Paulus was inclined to hear Barnabas and Paul, he oppoſed them, (as Jannes and Jambres, Egyptian Magicians, had Moſes,) that he might divert his attention, and hinder him from embracing the Chriſtian faith. *Then Saul, (who alſo is called Paul*,) filled with the Holy Ghoſt, ſet his eyes on him, and ſaid, O full of all ſubtilty and all miſchief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteouſneſs! wilt thou not ceaſe to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now behold the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou ſhalt be blind, not ſeeing the ſun for a ſeaſon. And immediately there fell on him a miſt and a darkneſs; and he went about ſeeking ſome to lead him by the hand*†. This miracle confirmed the Proconſul in the truth of Chriſtianity:—and now St. Paul fully entered upon his apoſtleſhip among the Gentiles.

Paul, Barnabas, and John Mark, looſing from Paphos, ſailed, moſt probably, up the river Ceſtus, to Perga, a city of Pamphylia, which is a country in Aſia Minor, near the coaſt, lying to the north, oppoſite the weſtern part of Cyprus. Perga was famous among the Heathen for a temple of Diana, and the

* Until now he had been called Saul, but after this he is always called Paul; for which, various reaſons have been aſſigned. Some ſuppoſe Saul was his Jewiſh, Paul his Roman name, and both were given him when circumciſed. Others think Paul was given him by Sergius Paulus, as a token of reſpect towards the inſtrument of his converſion. Beza gives it as his opinion, that the Greeks and Romans would naturally pronounce his name Paul; as one whoſe Hebrew name was *Jochanan*, would, by the Greeks and Latins, be called *Johannes*, by the French, *Jean*, by the Dutch, *Hans*, and by the Engliſh, *John*; and he thinks that the family of this proconſul might be the firſt who addreſſed him by the name of *Paul*.

† Acts xiii, 10, 11.

yearly feſtivals there held in honour of her, who was thence ſtyled Diana Pergæa. *The dwellers of Pamphylia* are mentioned among thoſe who were preſent on the day of Pentecoſt; but we are not told that Paul and his company made any converts in this city; only that John Mark, the nephew of Barnabas, without leave or conſent, left them and returned to Jeruſalem. Whether he was weary of travelling, or afraid of the difficulties that attended the Goſpel, or he did this from a ſtrong affection for his mother and friends, is uncertain. Whatever might have been the cauſe of his departure, he did wrong in leaving the work, and by this he alſo much grieved St. Paul: but he at laſt returned to his office, and was reconciled to the Apoſtle, as we learn from what he ſays to Timothy, *Take Mark and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the miniſtry**.

From Perga they went further into the country, to Antioch, a conſiderable city in the diſtrict of Piſidia, which lay north of Pamphylia, in Aſia Minor, and was a journey of about 130 miles. According to their uſual cuſtom, they went into the Jewiſh ſynagogue on the ſabbath day, and ſat down, probably in the chairs of the doctors, to intimate their errand; and, after the reading of the law and the prophets†, at the requeſt of the rulers, St. Paul preached to them an excellent ſermon; which it appears, ſome of the Jews diſliking, they went out before it was finiſhed; while the Proſelytes, who were Gentiles by birth, at the concluſion thereof, deſired to hear the ſame ſubject again the next ſabbath. When the ſervice was over, many of the Jews, and religious Proſelytes, followed theſe ſervants of God to their lodgings, who, ſeeing how they were affected, perſuaded them to continue in the doctrine of Jeſus Chriſt; ſhowing that it contains the richeſt diſplay of divine grace, offering pardon to the

* 2 Tim. iv. 11.

† The law and the prophets were divided into as many ſections, at leaſt, as there are Sabbaths in a year, and by reading them in rotation, the whole would be read in that ſpace of time. We have ſomething like this plan in our own Churches at preſent, by which many, probably who do not read much of the Scriptures at home, hear them read on the Lord's-Day.

guilty, purity to the unholy, and eternal life to the faithful.

The next ſabbath-day, there was a numerous aſſembly, almoſt the whole city came together to hear the word of God: no doubt, ſome out of curioſity, others with a deſign to cenſure and cavil, and ſeveral from a ſincere deſire to be inſtructed in the doctrine of Chriſt. The unbelieving Jews, on ſeeing this large company, wherein were many Gentiles, were enraged, and, being filled with envy, ſpake againſt Paul's doctrine; contradicting what he advanced, and, with blaſphemy, denying the Lord who bought them. Then Paul and Barnabas, with great freedom of ſpeech, ſaid, *It was neceſſary that the word of God ſhould firſt have been ſpoken to you: but ſeeing ye put it from you, and judge youerſlves unworthy of everlaſting life, lo, we* leave you to periſh in your infidelity, and *turn to the Gentiles. For ſo hath the Lord commanded us, ſaying, I have ſet thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou ſhouldeſt be for ſalvation unto the ends of the earth**. The meaning is not, ſays Doddridge, that they intended *no more* to make an offer to the Jews; for we find, they continued to addreſs them *firſt*, wherever they went. But they openly declared, that, while they continued at Antioch, they would loſe no more time in fruitleſs attempts on their ungrateful *countrymen*, but employ themſelves there in doing what they could for the converſion of the Gentiles†. And when theſe heard, that they were as welcome to the privileges and bleſſings of the Meſſiah's kingdom as the Jews, they rejoiced; very highly eſtimated the Goſpel, and the grace of God manifeſted therein: and as many as were then ordained to eternal life, believed in Chriſt to the ſaving of their ſouls. Thus the fall of the Jews was the elevation of the world, and their loſs the riches of the Gentiles.

How aſtoniſhing are the diſpenſations of God! firſt, he ſuffered the Gentiles in the early ages to revolt from him, and fall into idolatry, and ſelected the family of

* Acts xiii. 46, 47; Luke xxiv. 47; Acts i. 8; Matt. xxviii. 19, 20; Matt. x. 14, 15; Iſa. xlii. 6; and xlix. 6; Luke ii. 32. † Family Expoſitor.

Abraham as a peculiar ſeed to himſelf. Now he permitted the Jews to fall through unbelief, and took in the believing Gentiles. Our Saviour's words, in the commiſſion he gave to the Apoſtles, will explain this myſtery. *Go ye into all the world and preach the Goſpel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved; but he that believeth not, ſhall be damned**. According to which, ſays St. Paul, when addreſſing the converted Gentiles, concerning the diſobedient Jews, *Well; becauſe of unbelieving they were broken off, and thou ſtandeſt by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear. For if God ſpared not the natural branches, take heed leſt he alſo ſpare not thee. Behold therefore the goodneſs and ſeverity of God: on them which fell ſeverity; but towards thee, goodneſs, if thou continue in his goodneſs: otherwiſe thou alſo ſhalt be cut off. And they alſo, if they abide not ſtill in unbelief, ſhall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again*†. This ſhall be done when their hearts ſhall turn to Chriſt‡, from which time they ſhall ſee, how all the types and prophecies of the Old Teſtament have been fully accompliſhed in him; and the receiv- of ing them into the Chriſtian Church, will be overflowing life to the world§.

Notwithſtanding the oppoſition, contradiction and blaſphemy of the perverſe and unbelieving Jews, *the word of the Lord was publiſhed throughout all the region* or province. But when theſe, notwithſtanding all their wicked endeavours to prevent its ſucceſs, ſaw this; (being without the civil power in their hands in this Gentile city) they ſtirred up, by falſe ſtories, and miſrepreſentations of Paul and Barnabas, ſome females of diſtinction, who were proſelytes, and, by their intereſt, their huſbands and friends alſo, who were chief men of the city, and ſo far ſucceeded as to get them driven from their coaſts as peſts of the country. The Apoſtles, at the gates of Antioch, or the borders of their country, or perhaps at both, ſhook off the duſt from their feet, in obedience to Chriſt's direction‖,

* Mark xvi. 15, 16. † Rom. xi. 20—23. ‡ 2 Cor. iii. 16.
§ Rom. xi. 15. ‖ Matt. x. 14.

as a witneſs againſt them for rejecting the Goſpel; which emblematical act was a diſmal ſign of a forſaken people.

From thence they went to Iconium*, in Lycaonia, a ſmall region or province lying to the north-eaſt of Piſidia, and adjoining ſouthward to Pamphylia and Cilicia, a journey of about 96 miles. Here, that they might teſtify their unity, ſtrengthen each others hands in the miniſtry, and each confirm his reſpective teſtimony, they went together into the ſynagogue of the Jews; and ſpake, ſo convincingly, courageouſly, and with ſuch concern for their welfare, and eſpecially in demonſtration of the Spirit, and of power, *that a great multitude both of the Jews, and alſo of the Greeks, believed.* From the time of Alexander the Great, the Gentiles were uſually called Greeks; and ſome have conſidered them, as proſelytes of the gate, and others, as Gentiles of the place. It is ſuppoſed, that Thecla, ſo celebrated in the writings of the ancient fathers, was one of theſe believers. But, as at Antioch in Piſidia, ſo here alſo, the unbelieving Jews irritated and exaſperated the Gentiles againſt Paul and Barnabas, and thoſe alſo who had become Chriſtians. But the Goſpel being ſucceſsful, the Apoſtles continued here a long time, *ſpeaking boldly in the Lord, who gave teſtimony unto the word of his grace, and granted ſigns and wonders to be done by their hands*†. Until at laſt, having received intelligence that they no longer could be ſafe, they fled, according to the order Chriſt had given them,—*when they perſecute you in one city, flee ye into another*‡.

They eſcaped to Lyſtra, another city of Lycaonia, about twenty miles ſouth of Iconium, and there preached the Goſpel. At this place St. Paul wrought

* Iconium was formerly the capital of Lycaonia, and lay, not in the middle, as it is often placed, but on the weſtern borders thereof; near the confines of Piſidia, Galatia, and Phrygia, to the latter of which it ſeems once to have belonged; and, according to geographers, it lies thirty German miles from the Mediterranean, oppoſite the weſt cape of the iſland of Cyprus. It was a place of great ſtrength and conſequence, and therefore choſen for the ſeat of the Turkiſh kings in Leſſer Aſia, at the time they were moſt diſtreſſed by the weſtern Chriſtians. It is now called Cogni, and in ſo conſiderable a condition, as to be the reſidence of a Turkiſh Baſhaw. † Acts xiv. 1—3. ‡ Matt. x. 23.

a miracle on a man who was born lame, and ſo had never walked. If his lameneſs had been occaſioned by ſome recent hurt, he probably might have been cured by art, as is frequently the caſe; but it was natural, and by human means incurable. The Apoſtle ſaid with a loud voice, that all preſent might hear, and turn their eyes to him, *Stand upright on thy feet*;* with which words, accompanied by the power of God, the miracle was inſtantly wrought; for he immediately riſing up, *leaped and walked*, according to the prophecy of what ſhould be done in the days of the Meſſiah,—*then ſhall the lame man leap as an hart*†.

When the people ſaw what the apoſtle had done, they were ſo wonderfully and extremely affected, that they lifted up their voices, ſaying in the ſpeech of Lycaonia, (which ſome ſuppoſe was a dialect of the Greek, others that it rather approached the Syriac,) *The gods are come down to us in the likeneſs of men.* The Pagans were taught by their Poets to believe, that their gods ſometimes made viſits to men, and it is probable this opinion originated from the account they had, by tradition, of the appearing of angels to the Patriarchs of old. As, according to the Pagan theology, Jupiter was the chief god, and Mercury the meſſenger of the gods, ſo now the Lycaonians thought they had both theſe among them. And Mr. Harrington pertinently obſerves, that this perſuaſion might gain the more eaſily on their minds, on account of a fable believed among them, that theſe gods once deſcended from heaven in a human ſhape, and had been entertained by Lycaon, from whom the Lycaonians received their name‡. They called Barnabas, who perhaps was ſtately, *Jupiter*, whom the Heathen repreſented as old, but vigorous, robuſt, noble, and majeſtic; and Paul, *Mercury*, becauſe he was the chief ſpeaker. Religious veneration for theſe men led the prieſt of Jupiter, whoſe ſtatue and altar ſtood before the city gate, to attempt to offer ſacrifices, and worſhip them as gods; in which religious act the

* Acts iv. 10 † Iſa. xxxv. 6. ‡ Harrington's Works, p. 330.

people were ready and anxious to unite. When the Apoſtles heard of this, they, in deteſtation of the undue honours intended them, rent their clothes, which was an ancient ceremony, expreſſive of extreme grief and ſorrow, and uſually practiſed by the Jews*; and ſprang in among the people, uſing cogent arguments againſt their conduct, by which they could ſcarcely reſtrain them from their idolatrous deſign.

One would imagine, from theſe appearances, that if Paul and Barnabas were ſafe from perſecution at any place, it would be at Lyſtra, where the inhabitants took them for gods; yet here it unavoidably came upon them. The Jews, their moſt conſtant enemies, followed them from Antioch and Iconium, and, repreſenting them as odious, perſuaded the inconſtant multitude to ſtone Paul†, the chief ſpeaker, and, concluding that he was dead, dragged him out of the city. How unreaſonable, and mad with rage, were the Jews againſt the Goſpel! How barbarous and unjuſt were theſe perſecutors who ſtoned Paul, not by a judicial ſentence, but in a popular tumult; which would remind him of the like illegal procedure at Stephen's death. Who would value himſelf upon the applauſes of a multitude, ſays Doddridge, when he ſees how ſoon theſe changeable inhabitants were inſtigated to aſſault him as a malefactor, whom, but a few days before, they were ready to adore as a god; and how eaſily they were prevailed upon to exchange the inſtruments of ſacrifice for thoſe of murder! This was ſtrange, but not new: the voice of the multitude, concerning Chriſt, was, *Hoſanna to the ſon of David: bleſſed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, Hoſanna in the higheſt*‡; and, about ſix days after, petitioned Pilate that he might be crucified§. The new Diſciples ſtood round about Paul, from a particular regard to the inſtrument of their converſion, to give him what help they could, if alive; and to inter his corpſe, if dead. And who that had ſeen this lamentable ſight would not have concluded that here his labours were at an

* Gen. xxxvii. 34; and xliv. 13.
† 2 Cor. xi. 25.
‡ Matt. xxi. 9.
§ Varium et mutabile Vulgus.

end, and that henceforward we should hear no more of him in the history of the progress of Christianity? But God, who amidst all the outrage of these enemies secretly preserved the flame of life from being utterly extinguished, miraculously interposed to heal his wounds and bruises, and on a sudden restored him to perfect health; so that he rose up, and went into the city, probably after sun-set, for the enraged multitude would scarcely have suffered him in the day-time. That he should be able to do this, just after he had been left for dead, was a miracle little less than a resurrection from the dead. Especially considering the manner in which a Jewish malefactor was stoned: the witnesses first threw as large a stone as they could easily lift, with all possible violence upon his head, which alone was sufficient to dash the skull in pieces; all the people then joined, as long as any motion or token of life remained.

The day following, Paul departed with Barnabas to Derbe, another city of Lycaonia, on the borders of Cappadocia, and *preached the Gospel to the inhabitants, and taught many.* Persecution did not drive them from their work, but sent them to many places which otherwise would not so soon have been favoured with the glad tidings of salvation: thus the design of their enemies was over-ruled by divine Providence for the farther promotion of Christianity. This is supposed, by some, to have been the native place of Timothy*; and he, his mother Eunice, and grandmother Lois, are designated by St. Paul, as remarkable for their *unfeigned faith*†. From his youth these very pious women had taught him the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures‡. Mothers have great opportunity of instructing their children in useful knowledge, and those who have genuine piety will improve the same. The happiness or misery of children, in a great measure depends on their care or negligence in this matter. The mothers of the Kings of Judah are constantly mentioned, and as those were good or bad, so were their children.

* Cradock's Apostolical History, p. 85. † 2 Tim. i. 15. ‡ 2 Tim. iii, 15.

And when they had preached the Goſpel to the inhabitants of Derbe, they returned nearly by the ſame route, to Antioch in Syria. On their way, they confirmed the Diſciples in the faith of Chriſt, and exhorted them to continue therein; and alſo gave them to underſtand, that they *muſt through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.* The croſs was eminently the way to the crown in thoſe days; the Head, ſays Zanchy, having been crowned with thorns, it is not fit the feet ſhould tread on roſes;---an eaſy way to heaven is a falſe one. They alſo ordained ordinary miniſters to remain with the Churches, and to inſtruct and rule them. This was done after the ſame manner as they themſelves had been ordained, to this ſervice among the Gentiles; that is, by faſting, prayer, and the impoſition of hands. The word tranſlated *ordained,* ſignifies ſtretching out their hands upon thoſe whom they ordained, or the people, chooſing the perſons, to be ordained their miniſters, by ſtretching out their hands*. And having done this, *they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.*

They now paſſed through Piſidia to Pamphilia, and, when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia, a maritime town on the coaſt of the Mediterranean Sea, where we do not read of their having been before. From thence they ſailed to the coaſt of Syria, and went up the river Orontes to Antioch, where they had been ordained and commended to the grace of God, for aſſiſtance and ſucceſs in the work of the miniſtry among the Gentiles, which now they had faithfully fulfilled. This was their firſt peregrination, and took up the ſpace of about two years. Having gathered the Church together, they rehearſed all the ſucceſs God had given them, and how he had opened the door of faith to the idolatrous Gentiles. And there they reſted a conſiderable while, refreſhing themſelves among their friends, and inſtructing the Diſciples more fully in the Doctrines of Chriſt.

* Thoſe who wiſh to ſee more on this point, may conſult *Harrington's Prerogative of Popular Government, chap.* 5; and *Doddridge's Family Expoſitor,* in *loc.*

What we have already noticed, brings us to the ſixteenth year after the aſcenſion of Chriſt; at which time a circumſtance, of conſiderable importance, occurred in the Chriſtian Church. Certain Jews, of the ſect of the Phariſees, who had embraced Chriſtianity, went from Judea to Antioch, and taught the Gentile converts there, that unleſs they were circumciſed, according to the law of Moſes, and became obedient to the whole ſyſtem of his precepts, they could not poſſibly be ſaved by the Goſpel. This was the foundation of a great controverſy in the apoſtolical age, as appears from moſt of St. Paul's Epiſtles. The Holy Ghoſt had given a full deciſion of this point before, in the caſe of Cornelius, who was a Gentile; but thoſe falſe teachers pretended that what they taught was a new revelation made to the Apoſtles at Jeruſalem, and that they had authority from them, the Elders, and Brethren there, to impoſe this upon the uncircumciſed converts in the Church at Antioch. Paul and Barnabas much oppoſed the introduction of this perverſe doctrine, but with little effect; and as it was likely to do great miſchief, the Antiochean Church at length determined to ſend them, and ſome others of their number, to Jeruſalem, to conſult the Apoſtles and Elders, concerning the meaſures which were to be taken to prevent the ſpreading of the infection. For they well knew, that if circumciſion were impoſed on the Gentiles, all the other Moſaical ceremonies would follow in courſe, and they would be obliged to obſerve all thoſe rites.

Several members of the Church accompanied theſe meſſengers part of the way, who on their journey paſſed through Phenice and Samaria, and declared to the Chriſtians there, for their comfort and confirmation, the ſucceſs that God had given them, in the converſion of the idolatrous Gentiles in Aſia; which account, cauſed great joy to them all.

Theſe Meſſengers arriving at Jeruſalem, occaſioned the firſt Eccleſiaſtical Synod, which unanimouſly oppoſed circumciſion, and wrote *letters* by Paul and Barnabas, expreſſing this, to the churches in Antioch,

Syria, and Cilicia. That the falſe teachers might not ſay, theſe letters were forged or ſurreptitiouſly procured, and that the Gentile converts might be thereby confirmed and comforted, the Synod ſent Judas, ſurnamed Barſabas, and Silas, chief men among the Brethren, to accompany the Apoſtles to theſe churches; and their preſence might have a tendency to ſtop the mouths of gainſayers.

The Apoſtles returned to Antioch, and after continuing there awhile, Paul propoſed to Barnabas to go back again, and viſit the Churches which they had planted in Aſia, and ſee whether they were in a ſtate of proſperity. To this propoſal Barnabas readily conſented, but determined to have John Mark, his ſiſter's ſon, along with them; but he having departed from the work at Pamphilia, Paul would not agree thereto. Probably the uncle ſaid, if his nephew went not he would not go, but Paul inſiſted that he ſhould not accompany them; and the contention was ſo ſharp, or literally the paroxiſm roſe to ſuch a height, that the two Apoſtles ſeparated, and we do not, as far as I remember, read of their aſſociation after this. But nothing in the text implies, that the ſharpneſs was on both ſides. It is far more probable that it was not; Barnabas loſt his mildneſs and ſweetneſs of temper, and became ſharp and acrimonious; while Paul, who undoubtedly had the right on his ſide, maintained it with firmneſs and love. The former, in the heat of his temper, took Mark, and ſailed for Cyprus, his native country, without referring the matter to the Church, or waiting for the prayers of the faithful: and the latter made choice of Silas, ſometimes called Sylvanus, one of the Synod's meſſengers, to go along with him. And departing, they were recommended by the Brethren to the grace of God, for the ſafety of their perſons, and the ſucceſs of their work: which is a ſtrong proof that they thought Paul to be in the right. And as he travelled through Syria and Cilicia, with the letters, he found Churches *eſtabliſhed in the faith, and increaſing in number daily.* The Gentiles who were well affected, on being aſſured that they

were not to have the yoke of the ceremonial law impoſed upon them, would no doubt flock into the Chriſtian Church.

St. Paul now entered on what expoſitors, for the ſake of diſtinction, call his Macedonian journey. From Aſia he proceeded into Greece, and ſome think it was now that he ſailed from Tarſus, the place of his nativity, which was a haven in Cilicia, to the iſland of Crete*, and having for ſome time preached the Goſpel there, and planted Churches, he left Titus to ſet in order the things that he could not ſtay to ſettle, and ſailed back again to Cilicia. From thence he travelled to Derbe and Lyſtra, where he before had been.

At Lyſtra, the Apoſtle found a young man named Timothy, whoſe father was a Greek or Gentile, and ſome think a proſelyte of the gate, having renounced idolatry, and worſhipped the true God only; and his mother was a believing Jeweſs. Young Timothy had not only been favoured with a religious education, but had a good character for genuine piety, and promiſing ability for conſiderable uſefulneſs, among the Chriſti-

* Crete, in antient geography, is one of the largeſt iſlands in the Mediterranean, lying between 22° and 27° lon. E. and between 35° and 36° lat. N. Strabo ſays, this iſland is 287 miles in length; Pliny, 270; and Scylax, 312. According to Pliny, its breadth is no where more than 55 miles; whence, as Stephanus obſerves, it was ſtyled the *Long Iſland*; alſo, it was formerly called Hecatompolis, as having a hundred conſiderable towns or cities; and Macaris, the Happy Iſland, from the goodneſs of the ſoil, and fine temperature of the air. It has the Archipelago to the North, the African Sea to the South, the Carpathian to the Eaſt, and the Ionian to the Weſt. Joined with the ſmall kingdom of Cyrene, on the Lybian coaſt, it formed a Roman province. Conſtantine ſeparated Crete from Cyrene, in the new diviſion which he made of the provinces of the empire: and left Crete, with Africa and Illyria, to his third ſon, Conſtans. In the reign of Michal II, emperor of Conſtantinople, the Saracens made themſelves maſters of it without oppoſition. Nicephorus Phocas, afterwards emperor, delivered this fine iſland from the yoke of the infidels, after having been 127 years in their hands. It remained under the Romans until the time when Baldwin, E. of Flanders, being raiſed to the throne, liberally rewarded the ſervices of Boniface, Marquis of Montferrat, by making him king of Theſſalonica, and adding the iſland of Crete to his kingdom. That lord being fonder of gold than dignity, ſold it to the Venetians, A. D. under whom it aſſumed the modern name of *Candia*. After a war of 30 years continuance, from about 1645, in the courſe of which, more than 200,000 men fell, this iſland was entirely ſubdued by the Turks, in whoſe hands it ſtill continues. In the reign of the emperor Leo, it had twelve biſhops, all ſubject to the patriarch of Conſtantinople. The Mahometans have converted moſt of the Chriſtian temples into moſques; yet they have left two churches to the Greeks, one to the Armenians, and a ſynagogue to the Jews.

ans of that country. It appears that it had been revealed to some by the spirit of prophecy, that he would be an Evangelist*. St. Paul, being persuaded of this, accordingly laid his hands upon him, who received the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit as a qualification for the work of the ministry†. He also prevailed with him to be a companion in his travels, and conversed familiarly upon the most important and interesting subjects relative to his high vocation; after which he was admitted a preacher of the everlasting Gospel. To ensure a more extensive range, and consequently greater usefulness among mankind, he determined to have him circumcised; though not with a design to enforce the observance of the ceremonial law, but only that thereby he might prevent any occasion of offence among the Jews, who would not otherwise have suffered him to preach in their synagogues: therefore this would be harmless. But he was unwilling for Titus to be circumcised, though a believer and an Evangelist, because both his father and mother were Gentiles. So this pre-eminent Apostle says,—*Unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are without law, as without law, that I might gain them that are without law: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.*

As Philip and Peter had been, so Paul and Silas were also, directed by the Holy Ghost where to exercise their ministry; than which, nothing can be a greater argument of his sovereignty, nor a more evident proof of his Deity. *The Holy Ghost had made them overseers, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood*‡, and appointed their stations or the places where they should exercise their ministry, and discharge the trust they had received from him. Being forbidden by the Spirit, to preach the word in Asia proper, or Proconsular Asia, for the present, they directed their steps to Mysia§, a country

* 1 Tim. i. 18. † 1 Tim. iv. 14; 2 Tim. i. 6. ‡ Acts xx. 28.

§ Some say Mysia had its name from the abundance of *beech-trees* growing in it, and was called by the Lydians, who were a neighbouring people, Misæ. The people thereof are noted by Tully, in his Oration to Flaccus, to be despicable and base to a proverb.

adjoining on the weſt to Galatia, and thence attempted to go into Bithynia: but He ſuffered them not, according to their own plan and ſecret inclination.

Paſſing by Myſia, they went down to Troas*, a ſea-port on the eaſt ſide of the Ægean Sea, and near to which, as ſome think, ſtood Old Troy, ſo famous in ancient civil Hiſtory. While here, St. Paul had an extraordinary call, by a viſion, into Macedonia, a Grecian province in Europe:—there appeared a man in the Macedonian habit, and prayed him, ſaying, *Come over into Macedonia, and help us.* They that are without the Goſpel, of all the perſons in the world, want moſt help. It offers light to thoſe in darkneſs, liberty to thoſe in bondage, pardon to the guilty, purity to the unholy, conſolation to the unhappy, and to ſaints everlaſting glory, when the ſervices, ſufferings, and conflicts of this life are over. Hereupon the Apoſtle aſſuredly gathering, that the Lord had called him to preach to the people in that country, looſed from Troas, and, along with his company, went by a ſtraight courſe to Samothracia: which is a ſmall iſland lying on the weſt, near the Helleſpont, now called *Samandrachi*, containing, it is ſaid, more commodious harbours than other iſlands in the Ægean Sea. And the next day, they got to Neapolis, which was a city and harbour of Macedonia, ſeated on the river Neſſus, having Abdera on the eaſt, and Philippi on the weſt. Sailing from thence up the river Strymon, they arrived at Philippi†, which was a populous city in the firſt part of Macedonia, and a Roman colony. Here they abode certain days.

The Sabbath being come, they went out of this city, by a river ſide, to an oratory of the Jews, a place

* Troas was built by Lyſimachus, one of Alexander the Great's captains, who peopled it from the neighbouring cities, and called it Alexander, or Troas Alexandri, in honour of his maſter Alexander; who began the work, but lived not to bring it to any perfection. In following times it was called ſimply Troas.

† Philippi was ſo called from Philip king of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great, who repaired and beautified it, and increaſed the number of its inhabitants. Near it lay the fields thence called Campi Philippici, famous for two great and memorable battles, the former between Julius Cæſar and Pompey the Great, the latter between Auguſtus and Mark Antony on the one ſide, and Caſſius and Brutus on the other, and by which Rome entirely loſt her liberty.

where they aſſembled for prayer*; in which they ſat down, and preached the Goſpel to the women who reſorted thither. Here St. Paul made his firſt convert in Europe; who was a woman, and ſhe of ſome diſtinction. Her name was Lydia, (at leaſt ſhe was ſo called,) and a native of Thyatira, which was in the province of Lydia. She worſhipped God, had been a proſelyte to the Jewiſh religion, and therefore frequented this oratory for prayer. Though the Apoſtle was the inſtrument, yet God was the author of her converſion; and the manner in which it was accompliſhed is mentioned by the ſacred hiſtorian: *Whoſe heart the Lord opened, that ſhe attended unto the things which were ſpoken of Paul*†. The Greek word, as a writer obſerves, properly refers to the opening of the eyes. Converſion is the opening of the heart; of the underſtanding by illumination, of the will by renovation; the former is naturally ſhut by ignorance, and the latter perverſe, obſtinate, and unruly; and not all the angels in heaven, nor miniſters on earth, can throw light into the one, nor flexibility into the other; which is the prerogative and work of HIM who ſaid, *Let there be light, and there was light*; and can make the crooked become ſtraight. The Author of our faith ſays, *No man can come to me, except the Father which hath ſent me, draw him*‡; it is he, and he only, who works firſt to *will*, and then to *do*§. Yet God worketh by means: for Lydia gave cloſe attention to Paul's doctrine, and believed it; and her heart was opened to receive that Jeſus, as her

* Probably there were not many Jews ſettled in Philippi, and thoſe chiefly women, who could not afford to have a *ſynagogue*, and ſo had this *oratory* or *proſeucha*. The Jews had three ſorts of places for public worſhip, the Temple, Synagogues, and Oratories or houſes of prayer. Their Oratories were more ancient than their ſynagogues. Many learned men are of opinion, that they had no ſynagogues, ſtrictly ſpeaking, till after the Babylonian captivity. It is indeed ſaid, *They have burnt up all the ſynagogues of God in the land*, Pſa. lxxiv. 8; *(Col moadhe El) all the places of religious aſſemblies*, but by theſe many underſtand their oratories or proſeuchas houſes of prayer. The ſynagogues were in cities, and covered edifices like our churches or chapels; the oratories were without the cities, either by a river, or on the ſea-ſide, and often upon a hill, or mountain, and were encompaſſed about with a wall, and open above, like little courts. In theſe they prayed, as in the courts of the temple, every one apart; whereas in the Synagogues prayer was offered to God in public forms, common for the whole congregation.

† Acts xvi. 14. ‡ John vi. 44. § Phil. ii. 13.

Saviour, whom he preached:—*faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.* She was baptized, and her houſehold: the Syriac Verſion reads, *and when ſhe was baptized and her children.* In all languages of the world, as well as often in the Scripture, the word *houſe* is moſt uſually put for the *children* of the houſe, becauſe theſe maintain and keep it up. After this ceremony was over, ſhe beſought Paul and his aſſociates, if they judged her a ſincere convert, to lodge in her houſe. Probably he heſitated and was reluctant, which might cauſe her to uſe earneſt entreaty and paſſionate importunity. True religion would make this diſtinguiſhed female happy in herſelf, uſeful to her family, and a bleſſing to her neighbours; and ſhe would rejoice to entertain theſe ſervants of God.

While they continued her gueſts, one day, as they were going to the oratory, they met a young woman, who had been for ſome time under the influence of Python*, which was one of the epithets of Apollo, whoſe oracle at Delphos, was moſt famous for giving reſponſes when conſulted, and from this was called Python or Pythius, from the Greek word to conſult or aſk: hence, thoſe who gave anſwers when conſulted, by the help of an evil ſpirit, as this damſel did, were called Pythoniſts or Pythoneſſes. It appears, from the word being plural, that ſhe had ſeveral maſters, a ſociety perhaps, who had agreed to maintain her, as an oracle, in that country. She was much conſulted, for the diſcovering of ſecrets, or the foretelling of ſome things future; and thoſe who applied brought with them rewards, according to their rank and caſes; ſo that her maſters received much gain, of which ſhe had a very liberal ſhare. Following after Paul and his companions, ſhe cried out, ſaying with great earneſtneſs of voice and geſture, *Theſe men are the ſervants of the moſt high God, which ſhow unto us the way of*

† This Maid was poſſeſſed with a Devil, that ſpake out of her belly, and much ſwelled it when ſhe gave anſwers to thoſe who conſulted her. The Greeks called ſuch ἐγγαστριμυθους, becauſe they ſpake out of their bellies; and the Hebrews OBOTH, becauſe their bellies ſwelled like Bottles. *See Potter's Antiquities of Greece, chap. 9.*

salvation. And this she did many days. Whether the Devil in her was forced against his will to give this testimony to the Gospel, as he had done at another time to Christ's dignity and office, saying, *I know thee who thou art, Christ the Son of God;* or he did it voluntarily, but with the most mischievous views and designs,—either to persuade people to believe him in other things, since in this he spake the truth, or to ingratiate the Pythoness with these Ministers of Christ, that so she might have the more credit among the people,—I will not say: but Paul, being much troubled in mind, to hear the truth rendered suspected by the Father of lies, turned and said, I command thee, in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ, at whose disposal thou art, to abandon thy possession of the damsel. And power from Christ, in whose name the Apostle acted, immediately went along with his command, to the expulsion of the Devil. Now was made good that promise, *In my name shall they cast out devils*; and how greatly is it for the comfort of God's people, to be assured that he hath all the powers of darkness under his command and at his disposal. It was a great mercy to the whole city and adjacent country, to be rid of a guest, that had so much imposed on their credulity, and otherwise abused them.

But the masters, when they saw that all further gain by this maid was gone, were greatly enraged, and became the first authors of the Apostles' troubles in this place. In their rage, they caught Paul and Silas, and dragged them away to the market-place, that they might accuse them to the magistrates, who held their court for the administration of justice, in the street or open place, near the gates of the city. The indictment they brought against them runs thus: *These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, and teach customs which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans.* The Romans had an ancient law, which forbade the worship of new deities, without the permission of the senate; and, as appears from Livy, when violated, it was publicly vindicated by the authority of the state. The persecutors had said enough;

preſently the mob roſe up againſt them, ready to tear them to pieces; and the magiſtrates, pulling off the garments from Paul and Silas, commanded the lictors or public beadles, to beat them with rods. Scourging or whipping, by the Jewiſh law, was limited to the number of forty ſtripes*, and to ſhow their compaſſion, they gave but thirty-nine. *Of the Jews*, ſays St. Paul, *five times received I forty ſtripes, ſave one*†. But the Roman law did not limit the number, we may therefore ſuppoſe he and Silas now received many more than forty. He mentions, *in ſtripes above meaſure*‡, and alſo he refers to this in his Epiſtle to the Theſſalonians, *Ye know how ſhamefully we were treated at Philippi*§. Theſe were the ſcars and prints made on his body in his ſufferings for Chriſt: *I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jeſus*‖.

And this was not all: they confined them, and charged the jailer to keep them ſafely; who, having received ſuch a charge, *thruſt them into the inner priſon*, which was the cloſeſt and ſtrongeſt, *and made their feet faſt in the ſtocks*. It is generally ſuppoſed, that theſe were large pieces of wood uſed among the Romans, which not only loaded the legs of the priſoners, but ſometimes diſtended them in a very painful manner. So that the ſituation of the Apoſtles muſt have been very affecting, eſpecially if they lay, as it is very poſſible they did, with their backs, ſo lately ſcourged, on the damp ground. Impriſonment is uſually a ſorrowful condition, and attended with heavy ſighs and pitiful groans; but theſe priſoners, conſcious of their integrity, and enjoying a ſenſe of Divine favour, in a cloſe cell, faſtened in the ſtocks, and ſurrounded with midnight darkneſs, *prayed*, no doubt for their perſecutors as well as themſelves, *and ſang praiſes to God*, probably one or more of David's Pſalms, ſuitable to their caſe¶. While engaged in theſe devotions, on a ſudden there was a great earthquake, all the priſon-doors were opened, and all

* Deutr xxv. 3. † 2 Cor. xi. 24. ‡ 2 Cor. xi. 23.
§ 1 Theſſ. ii. 2. ‖ Gal. vi. 17.
¶ Luther uſed to ſay to Melancton, who was a timorous man, and eaſily diſcouraged at the dark proſpect of things, *Come, let us ſing the 46th Pſalm, and let earth and hell do their worſt.*

the prisoner's bonds were loosed; which things were considered by the Pagans as tokens of some divine appearance in favour of the oppressed and afflicted, who were suffering wrongfully. And these were evidently above the power of natural causes to effect. Philosophers tell us, that the reason of earthquakes is the strength of vapours pent up in the earth, which, seeking vent, cause it to shake: but this was by the immediate agency of the God of nature. The shock was so great, that the doors flew open, and yet he, whose power effected it, took care to prevent the house from falling upon the prisoners: and their fetters dropping off, plainly evinced a preternatural and miraculous interposition.

Amidst this scene of wonders, the jailer, supposing all the prisoners were fled, was thrown into great consternation and fear: for, by the Roman law, in that case, the keeper was to undergo the same punishment that was to have been inflicted on the criminal; which put him upon the desperate resolution of killing himself, to avoid falling into the hands of the executioner. St. Paul, either by hearing some desperate words that declared it, or by an immediate suggestion from God, was informed of his purpose; and, with a bravery and benevolence which only Christianity can give, felt solicitous to save the life of one, who, but a few hours before, had treated him with such rigour; accordingly he cried with a loud voice, saying, *Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.* The power of God concurring with this exclamation, he, who in despair was for committing suicide, awoke to such a sense of his sinful conditition, and concern for salvation, that, after throwing himself at the feet of these divine messengers, and taking them out of this confinement, most earnestly inquired of them, *what he should do to be saved?* probably referring to the testimony of the Pythoness, which had been so often and so publicly repeated. And they said, *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house.* This they explained more at large to him and his family, showing them the dignity of Christ's person, the

nature of his offices, his mediatory performances, the bleſſings purchaſed and ready to be conferred, and the nature and neceſſity of juſtifying faith. And after waſhing their ſtripes, he, and all his, were ſtraightway baptized*, and, by that ſolemn rite, admitted members of the Chriſtian Church. Thus the priſon, which was deſigned to be a means of ſuppreſſing the Goſpel, became ſubſervient to its propagation†.

When it was day, the magiſtrates, who moſt probably were terrified by the earthquake, and made ſenſible they had gone beyond their commiſſion, in what they had done to their new priſoners, ſent the perſons by whom they had been ſcourged on the preceding day, to the keeper of the priſon, ſaying, *let thoſe men go.* He communicated the meſſage to the Apoſtles; but Paul (knowing they had violated the Valerian law, which forbade that a Roman citizen ſhould be bound, and the Sempronian or Porcian, that he ſhould be beaten with rods,) refuſed to comply, and inſiſted they ſhould come themſelves and fetch them out. He undoubtedly herein had a regard to the honour and intereſt of Chriſtianity in this place, as well as to their own civil rights as men and Romans. On their hearing of this reſolution, and that the priſoners were Romans, they delayed not, but went and comforted them, and in a reſpectful manner conducted them out of priſon, humbly begging of them to leave the city. This token of public reſpect from the magiſtrates, would encourage the new converts, and remove a ſtumbling-block out of the way of others, who might not have diſcerned the real characters of theſe Apoſtolic men, amidſt ſo much infamous abuſe as they had before ſuffered. Being honourably acquitted, they went to Lydia's houſe, where it is likely Timothy and the others had been all the while.

* There is reaſon to believe that they were baptized by ſprinkling, the place would not admit of dipping: and Paul himſelf had been baptized by ſprinkling, as may be argued from the circumſtance of the place where he was baptized. Acts ix. 18.

† Mr. Fox tells us, that Tindal was inſtrumental in the converſion of the Keeper, his Daughter, and ſeveral others, during his impriſonment.

St. Paul and his companions now went through Amphipolis*, and Apollonia, to Theſſalonica†, the metropolis of that part of Macedonia, where was a Jewiſh ſynagogue, and ſome think the only one in that province, which might be the reaſon of their paſſing ſo haſtily through the other two cities. Here, according to the Apoſtle's uſual cuſtom of offering the Goſpel firſt to the Jews, he entered into their aſſembly, and for three ſucceeding ſabbaths was permitted to addreſs them; reaſoning out of their own Scriptures, Moſes and the Prophets, opening the prophecies concerning the neceſſity of the ſufferings of the Meſſiah, for the ſins of mankind, and his riſing again from the dead; and plainly ſhowed that theſe were accompliſhed in Jeſus, whom, though men had perſecuted, he was commanded and rejoiced to preach.

The ſucceſs was various: ſome of the Jews, being convinced of the truth, embraced Chriſtianity; and theſe *conſorted* with Paul and Silas, as the word ſignifies, put themſelves into their poſſeſſion, were knit to them in the cloſeſt bonds, and ſo well affected that they were willing to ſhare the ſame lot with them. And likewiſe a great number of Proſelytes, both men and women, the latter perſons of diſtinction and eminence, believed and embraced the Goſpel. But, on the other hand, the unbelieving Jews, being tranſported with a blind and furious zeal‡, collected together ſome

* Amphipolis was ſo called, becauſe encompaſſed by the river Strymon, the old boundary between Thrace and Macedonia. It was built by Cimon the Athenian, who ſent 10,000 Athenians as a colony thither.

† This city ſtood upon the Thermaian Bay, and was anciently called *Thermæ*; but being rebuilt and enlarged by Philip, the father of Alexander the Great, upon his victory over the Theſſalonians, it was, in memory of that, called Theſſalonica, which ſignifies, *The victory of the Theſſalia*. It was remarkable for its trade and commerce, being a maritime ſituation, in which many Jews had ſettled. It is now, by a corrupt pronunciation, called *Salonichi*, the capital of Macedonia in European Turkey, celebrated for the remains of magnificent antiquities and grand churches, the ſeat of the Turkiſh Baſſa, and the ſee both of a Greek and Roman catholic archbiſhop, moſt of the inhabitants being ſtill Chriſtians. It has a good foreign trade, and lies 264 miles W. of Conſtantinople.

‡ Ζηλώσαντες, i. e. were tranſported with a blind and furious zeal. Zeal, according to the different nature of its objects, and the ſprings from whence it flows, is either a good or bad principle. It is ſeveral times in the ſcripture uſed in a bad ſenſe, as *they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge*, (Rom.

idle, mean, and profligate fellows, who frequented the markets, and would do any thing, however bad, for a ſmall reward, and by theſe raiſed a mob; by which means the city was ſoon in an uproar, and thrown into confuſion; and, in this riotous manner aſſaulting the houſe of Jaſon, where Paul and his companions lodged, they ſought for them, intending to bring them out to the inflamed mob, that they might ſtone them to death; but, being diſappointed, they dragged out Jaſon, and ſome others of the brethren who were with him, to the rulers of the city, crying, *Theſe that have turned the world upſide down, are come hither alſo*:—that is, have cauſed great confuſion and diſturbance in every place through which they have paſſed, mixing as it were heaven and earth together; which is an accidental hint of the general progreſs of the Chriſtian religion. Their accuſation went further, *Whom Jaſon* received; and theſe all do contrary to the decrees of Cæſar, ſaying, That there is another king, one Jeſus.* This was alledging, that they had a ſecret deſign upon the empire itſelf, which they covered under the ſpecious pretence of religion; in ſhort, that Jeſus was to rival Cæſar; and that Jaſon, knowing it, had ſecretly received them into his houſe, that he might help forward their plot. This was falſe: for though Paul affirmed Chriſt to be a king, yet ſaid he not that his kingdom is of this world; therefore he certainly was not Cæſar's rival.

x. 2); *concerning zeal, perſecuting the church,* (Phil. iii. 6); and in many other places. And we have the words *indignation, envy, emulation,* and the like, all which, in the original, are *zeal.* A bad zeal is nothing but the exceſs of ſelf-love; it is a noiſy, impetuous thing, that drives on with wildneſs and fury, overturning and deſtroying whatever ſtands in its way; it is ſelf on fire, and it ſets the world on fire, as far as its influence will reach.

* Acts xvii. 7. Jaſon ſeems to have been a relation of St. Paul, *Rom.* xvi. 21; and it is not improbable, but he was an *Helleniſt Jew.* Ὑποδέδεκται, *clanculum accipit,* ſays Eraſmus, he has received them cloſely, covertly, privily, and with deſign; and all theſe, Paul and Silas, Jaſon and the other Brethren, act contrary to the decrees of Cæſar. There was an expreſs law againſt any man's taking upon him the title of King, or of being called King, within the dominion of the Roman empire, without the Emperor's permiſſion and approbation; and the ſubordinate Imperial powers, were moſt jealous of Jews, becauſe Judas of Galilee, Thudas, and other falſe Meſſiahs, had drawn the people into inſurrections and rebellions. The unbelieving Jews took the advantage of this jealouſy of the Emperor, to traduce both Chriſt, and his Miniſters and People, in every city where they came, as enemies to Cæſar.

If he had, these Jews would have been well-pleased with his doctrine, notwithstanding all their pretences for the honour and interest of the Emperor; for they expected the Messiah would be a secular Prince, and rescue them from their subjection to him, who at that time was Claudius Cæsar. It is but too common for base and wicked people to charge their own crimes on the innocent. But these magistrates were men of sense and temper, and acted more agreeably to their characters, than those at Philippi; for having taken security of Jason, and the others whom the mob found in his house, for their appearing when called upon, they dismissed them.

The converts at Thessalonica, having hid and secured Paul and Silas, in some proper place, from the violence of the mob; on the return of Jason and his friends from their trial, immediately, even the same night, had them conveyed to Berea, now called Voria, a great and populous city of Macedonia, which lies south, towards Athens, and not far from Pella, the birth-place of Alexander the Great. The difficulties they met with, in preaching the Gospel, neither made them decline nor despond in it; for seeing a synagogue of the Jews, they entered it on the sabbath-day, and preached with good success. Although St. Paul had all the credentials that were necessary, to convince every unprejudiced mind that he was immediately commissioned from God, yet he demanded the belief of the people no further, than what he delivered appeared agreeable to the divine revelation contained in the Scriptures. As he appealed to them for the truth of what he advanced, so the Bereans, who were of an excellent spirit, free to investigate truth, and willing to receive it upon proper evidence, searched the scriptures of the Old Testament daily, that they might know whether his doctrine was consonant to what is therein said of the Messiah; and finding, on a careful examination, that it agreed with the standard of truth, they would no longer withhold their assent, but received it *with all readiness of mind.* Herein they far exceeded the Jews at Thessalonica; and showed an example

which all should follow, who are favoured with the Gospel. Those persons who are teachable, in the things relating to God, possess true generosity of soul; and the most diligent and accurate search into the truth, should always precede the adoption of religious principles. *To the law and to the testimony: prove all things: hold fast that which is good.* Comparing the sermons of ministers with the oracles of God, is building faith on rational grounds; and all who do thus, not only become settled in their own minds, but also are able to give to others a reason of the hope that is in them. As many of the Berean Jews, and Jewish Proselytes, who were Greeks or Gentiles by birth, became Christians, so, as may reasonably be supposed, they would, not only be rooted and grounded in Christianity, but able to defend this religion against its enemies.

The unbelieving, restless, wicked Jews at Thessalonica, hearing that Paul preached the Gospel at Berea, went thither, and raised a persecution against him, as they had before done at home. Their inveterate malignity led them to use falsehood and deceit, by which they *stirred** *up* the people to join them in their diabolical proceedings. Hereupon the intelligent and sincere converts protected and sent him away towards the sea: but Silas and Timothy abode there still, to encourage the new believers.

Those who had the care of St. Paul, conducted him to Athens†; and, before they left the city, he gave

* The word σαλευοντες, rendered *stirred up*, according to Blackwall, signifies primarily *raising a storm*; Phavorinus says, it is properly spoken of a ship, which, when riding at anchor, is *agitated* by the waves of the sea; and a violent agitation of the sea, admirably illustrates the rage and fury of a seditious multitude. *See Blackwall's Sacred Classics, vol. 1. p. 230,* and *Parkhurst's Greek Lexicon.*

† Athens was one of the most renowned cities of the world; and, when St. Paul visited it, had been a city for 1600 years. It was built by Cecrops, five years before Moses fled out of Egypt into the land of the Midianites, and from him called *Cecropia*: there succeeded him at least forty princes. In the reign of Erichthonius it acquired the name of Athens, from Αθηνη, the Greek name of the goddess Minerva, who was esteemed its protectress. In its most flourishing state, it was a day's journey, or something more than 22 Roman miles in circumference. Cicero describes it as the fountain whence all other nations derived learning, religion, arts, and laws. It stands on the gulf of the Ægean Sea, which washes the isthmus of the Peloponnese, or Morea; in that district of Greece, properly so called, which was named Attica, whence

them orders to tell his companions to follow him, with all convenient expedition, to assist in cultivating that extensive place, overgrown with noxious and luxuriant weeds. While waiting for their arrival, he made observations, and saw the Athenians were wholly given to idolatry, and their city full of temples, idols, and altars; of which there were more, than in all Greece beside, and the citizens observed double the number of feasts and holy-days to any others. Whatever strange gods of Asia, Europe, and Africa, were recommended, they admitted, and allowed them altars; so that Petronius humorously says, It is easier to find a god than a man there. In Paul's perambulations, among the rest, he discovered an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD; respecting the origin of which, Dr. Wellwood observes,---I know there are different opinions about this altar, and upon what occasion it came to be erected; but it is very probable, and I have several ancient historians and divines for vouchers, that it was done by Socrates. It seems, instead of raising an *altar*, as was the custom, to any of the fictitious gods of Greece, he took this way, as the safest, to express his devotion to the one true God; of whom the Athenians had no notion, and whose incomprehensible being, he insinuated by this inscription, was far beyond the reach of their, or of his own understanding; and it is very reasonable to think, that it was owing to the veneration they had for the memory of its founder, that it came to be preserved so many ages after, though they understood not the sense of the inscription*. The wiser sort of the Heathen Philosophers believed there was one God superior to all

the Attic dialect was esteemed as the purest Greek. It is now called *Setines*, or according to Dr. Chandler, *Athini*; and is in the possession of the Turks, who have there five mosques. Three-fourths of its inhabitants are Christians, who have many churches and oratories, and among whom, a metropolitan Greek bishop resides.

* See Wellwood's introduction to his translation of *The Banquet of Xenophon*. This altar βωμον was an high one, or erected in a high place. There are accounts of its origin which differ from that of Dr. Wellwood. Some say the Athenians were so given to idolatry, that they adopted all the idol-gods, which they understood were worshipped any where; and supposing there might be some of which they had never heard, they erected altars to these unknown

the reſt, whom they called the father of gods and men; and they no doubt learned from the Jews, that their God was inviſible, his name ſacred, and his nature unſearchable: and to him was this altar erected, and this inſcription given.

Their abominable idolatry affected the Apoſtle ſo much, that *his ſpirit was ſtirred in him*, or, as the word ſignifies, it was as if a *ſharp edge* had been ſet upon it. He was influenced with holy indignation, at ſeeing the glory due to God, given to idols; with grief, that ſuch a learned people ſhould be ſo blinded and wretchedly impoſed upon by the Devil; and with zeal, to inſtruct, reform, and bring them into the way of truth. He loſt no time, but at once entered upon this important work. According to his uſual cuſtom, he began with the Jews and Proſelytes; the former of whom, after their return from the Babylonian captivity, had a great averſion to idols; and the latter, had renounced polytheiſm. In the ſynagogue he diſputed with theſe, proving, by arguments from indiſputable authority, that Jeſus is the Chriſt. In the market, being a place of public reſort, he preached daily to the idolatrous Gentiles, after the manner he had done to thoſe at Lyſtra, that they ſhould turn from theſe vanities to the only living and true God, the creator and governor of the world; alſo that Chriſt is the Son of God, and the only Saviour of men; and aſſerted and explained the nature and deſign of his death and reſurrection.

deities. Others ſay, the occaſion of this altar, was a dreadful peſtilence which raged in Athens, and for the removal of it, they ſacrificed to all their gods, but to no purpoſe. Hereupon they were adviſed by Epimenedes, a devout man among them, to erect an altar to that God who had power over the plague, and offer ſacrifices to him, which they did, and becauſe they knew not how to call him, they inſcribed it to *the unknown God. (See Laertius's Life of Epimenedes.)* If this was the cauſe of it, it was erected above 430 years before Chriſt, for about that time the peſtilence raged in Athens, and ſo reduced the inhabitants, that, for increaſing its population, a law was made that every man ſhould have two wives. Much is ſaid of this plague by Thucydides, who recovered from it, and by Hippocrates, that great maſter in the art of phyſic. We have the expreſs teſtimony of Lucian that there was an altar with ſuch an inſcription, and that the neighbouring nations uſed to ſwear by that unknown God who had his altar at Athens.

Some of the philoſophers, of the ſects of the Epicureans and Stoics, (the former of which held the doctrine of materialiſm, and the latter of irreſiſtible fate,) encountered him. Part ſaid, *What will this babbler* ſay?* others, he ſeemeth to be a *ſetter-forth of ſtrange gods.* Theſe concluded that *Jeſus* and *anaſtaſis*, the word he uſes for the reſurrection, were two new deities, the former a god, and the latter a goddeſs.

The Athenians, being great newſmongers, and ſpending much of their time in hearing and telling new things, (for which Demoſthenes much blamed them) were prompted by curioſity to aſk the Apoſtle the meaning of his doctrine, and, for the purpoſe of hearing it, led him to Areopagus or Mars-Hill, where the temple of Mars, the ſuppoſed god of war, ſtood, and which was the higheſt court in Athens. Before the Areopagites, the philoſophers and judges, who were the moſt learned Heathens in the world, he ſtood up and preached. In the beginning of his diſcourſe, he charged them with being in all things *too ſuperſtitious;* by which he meant their worſhipping more deities than their neighbours: ſo Beza renders the word, *religioſiores* more religious. If he had ſaid, they were too idolatrous, moſt probably the fate of Socrates would have been his alſo. And as there was at Athens a law which made it a capital crime to introduce any new gods in the ſtate, and as he was before the ordinary judges of criminal matters, who in a particular manner were entruſted with the care of religion; ſo he availed himſelf of the *altar* which he had

* The original word σπερμολόγος ſignifies a gatherer of ſeeds. The Athenians, according to Euſtathias, applied this name to thoſe who ſpent their time in the market places, and got their living by *collecting the refuſe* they met with there. Becauſe the σπερμολογοι were a noiſy, talkative ſort of men, hence the word is particularly applied to *babbling, chattering fellows.* (See Parkhurſt's Greek Lexicon.) As the word is uſed for *a little bird*, that hops from place to place, in the fields or market places in cities, and picks up here a grain and there another; ſo, to ſuch they compared St. Paul, ſuppoſing that he went from place to place, and here picked up one tale, and there another, that he might furniſh himſelf with matter of prate. They looked upon him as an idle, worthleſs, contemptible fellow. The Heathen, ſome tell us, called all thoſe babblers, who aſſerted the reſurrection of the dead.

found in the city, inscribed *To the unknown God*, and only explained to them one, whom their government had already received: *Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you.* Having providentially this inscription for a text, he not only avoided the law, but also had a fine opportunity of vindicating the whole system of both natural and revealed religion.

He told them, that the true God is the creator, proprietor, and governor of the universe; needs no edifices erected by men to dwell in, for his immense presence cannot be limited to a material temple. He put them in mind, that Aratus, a native of Cilicia, one of their own poets, who lived almost three hundred years before that time, had taught them this doctrine, in the beginning of a book he wrote on the course of the heavens, where he has these words, *For we are also his offspring**. From this concession, he inferred the unreasonableness and absurdity of their worshipping images and statues, which cannot give any suitable representation of an omnipresent and infinite Spirit, but must tend rather to suggest the most dishonourable thoughts of him.

Having showed them the absurdity of idolatry, he proceeded to say, *the times of ignorance indeed God overlooked*, as a writer paraphrases it, *the beams of his eye did in a manner shoot over it*; he did not appear to take notice of them, by sending express messages, as he did to the *Jews*. But now, this day, this hour, said he, puts an end to the divine forbearance, and brings either greater mercy or punishment. Now *God commandeth all men every where to repent*: there is a dignity and grandeur in this expression, becoming an ambassador from the King of Heaven. And this universal demand of repentance, declared as exten-

* These words are also found in the hymn of Cleanthes to Jupiter, which is one of the purest and finest pieces of natural religion of its length in the whole world of pagan antiquity. (*For an English version of which, see the Christian's Magazine, vol. 2. p. 91.*). As these words are found in two different poets, this possibly may be the reason why St. Paul speaks in the plural number, *certain of your own poets have said*: however, Homer, Hesiod, and many other Greek poets have said nearly the same thing, calling *Jove, the father of men and of gods.*

ſive guilt in the ſtrongeſt manner, and admirably confronted the pride of the haughtieſt Stoic among them; while it bore down the irrational and contemptuous plea of fatality: for how could any one repent of doing, what he could not but have done? He enforced his doctrine by the moſt powerful arguments, drawn from the day of future retribution; whereof God hath given aſſurance to all men, in that he hath raiſed Chriſt from the dead, to be the glorious judge of all. With what admirable ſkill did he adapt his diſcourſe to his auditors, in their ſupreme court of juſtice! But when they heard of the reſurrection of the dead, which they thought incredible, ſome, from the pride of reaſon, oppoſed this article of faith by *mocking;* while others, who had probably more ſenſe and better manners, ſaid, *We will hear thee again of this matter.* So he departed, without finiſhing all he intended to have ſaid, leaving his learned auditory divided in their judgments. However, ſome believed the Goſpel, and clave to him, among whom was Dionyſius the Areopagite, one of the judges of the court, and a woman of diſtinction, named Damaris.

In Athens St. Paul made but few converts. This was a city moſt famous for learning, and could boaſt its Solon, Socrates, Plato, Ariſtotle, Demoſthenes, and many other excellent philoſophers; but thoſe now addreſſed, were too eaſy, indolent, and wiſe in their own conceit, to receive the Goſpel. Greece was called *the eye of the world;* and Athens *the eye of Greece;* having been for many years the univerſity of the world, the rendezvous of ſcholars, and much reſorted to from all parts. How true are thoſe words of Chriſt, *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, becauſe thou haſt hid theſe things from the wiſe and prudent, and haſt revealed them unto babes. Even ſo, Father, for ſo it ſeemed good in thy ſight.* The great ſcholar, and the ſerious Chriſtian, rarely meet in the ſame perſon. Seldom doth the wiſdom of God, and the wiſdom of the learned agree. When they are told of heavenly things, which are beyond the diſcovery of the light of nature, they aſk, How can theſe

things be? If they are ſpoken to on ſubjects which lie within the precincts of reaſon, they ſay, We knew theſe things before. Matters of divine revelation, are to their learned wiſdom, either impoſſible, irrational, unnatural, or weak and fooliſh; hence the pride of underſtanding is one cauſe of their ruin.

The Apoſtle did not ſtay long at Athens, but went to Corinth*, 54 miles weſtward, where he met with more encouragement, and continued about two years. This was the metropolis of Achaia Propria, which was a part of Greece: it alſo made very great profeſſions of learning and wiſdom, and was almoſt equally celebrated for philoſophers and orators. Being ſituated in the middle of the iſthmus, it was a famous mart, commanding the trade of both Aſia and Europe; Cenchrea was its port for the eaſt or Ægean Sea, as Iochæum or Lechæum for the weſt or Adriatic Sea; which cauſed a great influx of people, and the citizens were rich and luxurious, even to a proverb. They were idolaters, and had, within their city, the Temple of Iris, and, without, upon the mountain Acrocorinthus, the Temple of Venus, to whoſe goddeſs, as Strabo ſays, were conſecrated a thouſand harlots every year, and conſequently very great impurities were practiſed

In Corinth St. Paul found a Jew by nation, but by religion a Chriſtian, named Aquila, of Pontus in Aſia, but lately come from Italy, with his wife Priſcilla. The reaſon of their leaving Italy, was the edict of the emperor Claudius, who commanded all Jews to depart from Rome. Suetonius ſays, this edict was publiſhed in the ninth year of his reign, and,

* As the genius of the Corinthians led them to commerce rather than martial exploits, their city became the fineſt in all Greece. It was adorned with the moſt ſumptuous buildings, as temples, palaces, theatres, porticoes, &c. all enriched with a beautiful kind of columns, which from the city were called *Corinthian.* In the year A. A. C. 146, Lucius Mummius, the Roman conſul, pillaged and burnt it to the ground. And thus it continued, till Julius Cæſar, travelling into thoſe parts, and viewing the ruins of the city, and obſerving its excellent ſituation for trade, cauſed it to be rebuilt and ſent a colony thither; after which, it became great, and but little inferior to the former. It is now called *Corantho* and *Gerame,* and is in the poſſeſſion of the Turks: but the inhabitants are moſtly Chriſtians of the Greek church, who are allowed liberty of conſcience.

the cauſe of it was the warm diſputes that took place there, between the unbelieving Jews, and thoſe of them who were converted to Chriſtianity, concerning Chriſt. Theſe two perſons had already begun to occupy a houſe in this city, and follow their uſual buſineſs, which was making *tents* of linen or ſkins; ſuch as were uſed in thoſe hot countries in the ſummer ſeaſon, by ſoldiers, when encamped in the field; by ſhepherds, while tending their flocks; and by travellers on their journies, when they had no houſes wherein to lodge. According to Joſephus, this was not only a lucrative, but an honourable employment. As St. Paul in his younger days had been initiated in this trade, ſo now, being in want of pecuniary aſſiſtance, he went to reſide at the habitation of Aquila and Priſcilla, and wrought with them.

Some may think it ſtrange, that he, who had been educated at the univerſities of Tarſus and Jeruſalem, ſhould be a maker of tents: but the moſt wealthy and learned among the Jews, in their juvenile days, were taught ſome manual occupation. Lightfoot and others tell us, that a father was to do for his ſon theſe five things, viz. to circumciſe him, redeem him, inſtruct him in the law, teach him a trade, and take him a wife. And Rabbi Judah ſays, the father that teacheth not his ſon a trade, does in effect make him a thief. Yet it is proper to conſider, that St. Paul, being aware of the ill uſe that might be made of his example, takes great care throughout his writings to aſſert the liberty and privilege of the Goſpel-miniſtry, freeing it from the neceſſity of manual labour. He declares, particularly in the ninth chapter of his firſt Epiſtle to the Corinthians, that he had power to forbear working, and to demand a ſuitable maintenance from the church. Under the law, abundant proviſion was made for the Prieſts; and both the Heathen and Mahometans are liberal to their clergy. *Let him*, ſays the Apoſtle, *that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth, in all good things.* The meaning of which is, that Chriſtians ſhould allow their Miniſters a comfortable ſubſiſtence, and contri-

bute towards it freely and cheerfully. They are not *to entangle themſelves with the affairs of this life*, and therefore require ſupport. This is a duty which they, generally ſpeaking, love as little to inſiſt upon as any; and it is much better when the liberality of their hearers renders it unneceſſary; who ſhould never forget that it is God's expreſs appointment. When the people withheld the dues of the Levites, he brought this charge againſt them, that *they had robbed him.* St. Paul gives us his reaſons why he *laboured, working with his own hands:*---he frequently did this, that his generous zeal and diſintereſted benevolence might clearly appear, and that none might charge him with covetous and worldly views*; that he might cut off all occaſion from the falſe apoſtles to claim ſupport by this example†; and that indolent Chriſtians might not pretend, by his conduct, to juſtify their idleneſs‡.

While thus employed, his care and vigilance relaxed not in the work of the miniſtry; for, there being many Jews ſettled in the city, who had a ſynagogue, he went into it every ſabbath-day, and preached the Chriſtian doctrine, labouring to convince both them, and the Greek Proſelytes, that Jeſus was the Meſſiah and appointed Saviour of men, and thus prevail with them to embrace him.

While St. Paul was at Athens, he ſent Timothy to the Theſſalonians, to ſee how they proſpered, and to confirm them in the faith, who returned before he left the city; and bringing him the comfortable tidings of their perſeverance and growth in grace, he ſent both him and Silas into Macedonia, further to confirm the Churches, and ordered them to meet him at Corinth, to which place he was then going. Now after he had been ſome time at that city, they came to him; who hearing their united teſtimony, concerning the great proficiency and growth of the Churches in Philippi, Theſſalonica, and Berea, *he was preſſed in ſpirit* the more, and *conſtrained* § *to teſtify to the Jews, that Jeſus was*

* See Acts xx. 33—35. 1 Cor. ix. 12, 15. 2 Cor. xi. 7—11. and xii. 13—18.
† 2 Cor. xi. 12, 13, comparad with Tit. i. 11. ‡ 2 Theſſ. iii. 7—12.
§ *He was preſſed in ſpirit,* συνείχετο *he was conſtrained,* ſo the word is tranſlated, 2 Cor. v. 14. Doddridge renders it, *was borne away* by an un-

Chriſt. i. e. He had a freſh breathing of the Spirit of God upon his ſpirit; intus æſtuabat, ſays Beza, *he burnt within*, was inflamed with zeal, to prove this grand and important truth, that Chriſt was the Meſſiah; and this was the uniform ſcope of all his diſcourſes, diſputations, and reaſonings, in the Jewiſh ſynagogues.

As at other places, ſo here alſo, the Jews in general rejected the Goſpel. It is ſaid, *they oppoſed themſelves* to the Apoſtle and his doctrine; the original word is a military term, and ſignifies *they ſet themſelves as it were in battle array*, or *in order*, to give him battle: it imports the vehemency of their oppoſition, and their unanimity in the ſame. They alſo *blaſphemed;* ſpeaking reproachfully of Chriſt; and reviled the Apoſtle, for preaching him as their Meſſiah. Hereupon he ſhook his upper garment, in token of his deteſtation of their conduct, and to ſhow that none of their guilt ſhould cleave to him; and ſaid, *Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.* He ſeems to allude to the Sacrificer's laying his hand, and by that ceremony ſignifying the tranſmitting of his guilt, upon the head of the beaſt to be ſacrificed: as if he had ſaid,—Let the blame of your deſtruction be on yourſelves; I am free from the guilt of your blood, having fully diſcharged my truſt among you, in proving that Jeſus is the Chriſt, offering him and his benefits, and warning you of the hazard of refuſing him; hence I leave you, under the weight of your own guilt, and go to the idolatrous Gentiles; that to them may be preached the Saviour whom you have rejected.

And departing thence, he entered into the houſe of a devout Gentile, converted to Chriſtianity, and, becauſe he reſided near the ſynagogue, preferred this ſituation that he might give any of the Jews or Greeks, who were ſo diſpoſed, an opportunity of attending

uſual impulſe *in his ſpirit.* Heinſius and ſome others think, that the phraſe συνειχετο το πνευματι means, *he was borne away by* an extraordinary impulſe of *the Spirit of God*, the agency of which in this matter, ſays Doddridge, I readily acknowledge, but apprehend the phraſe here uſed rather refers to *the effect that agency produced.* Family Expoſitor, *in loc.*

upon him. His labours had not been in vain; for *Criſpus, the chief ruler of the ſynagogue believed in the Lord, with all his houſe.* The Rulers were perſons who preſided in the worſhip, exerciſed diſcipline, and ſuperintended the affairs of the ſynagogue; in each of which, ſome ſay there were ſeven. This man was a Jew of ſome eminence; and he and his family made an open profeſſion of their faith, by receiving Chriſtian baptiſm. And many of the Corinthians, hearing the Goſpel in the houſe of Juſtus, believed, and were baptized. Among the converts at Corinth, was Epenetus, who probably was the firſt in the houſehold of Stephanus, whoſe family was the Apoſtle's firſt-fruits of Achaia; and it appears they were poſſeſſed of wealth, for they devoted themſelves to the ſervice of the ſaints; and were all baptized by St. Paul himſelf, as alſo afterwards were Criſpus and Caius, but no others of the Corinthians: it is not an improble ſuppoſition, that Silas chiefly had that work aſſigned to him.

The great Apoſtle of the Gentiles, by teaching in the houſe of Juſtus ſo near to the ſynagogue, and receiving thoſe who believed into full communion with the Jewiſh Chriſtians, exaſperated the unbelieving Jews, which ſeems to have diſcouraged him; and he entertained thoughts of leaving the city. But to prevent his departure, and embolden him in his work, the Lord ſpake to him by night in a viſion, and ſaid, *Be not afraid, but ſpeak, and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man ſhall ſet on thee, to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.* This charge is enforced by three very powerful inducements, namely, the aſſurance of the preſence of God, of the ſafety of his perſon, and of the ſucceſs of his miniſtry. On theſe encouragements, he continued * a year and ſix

* Ἐκάθισε *he ſat down*, importing that he applied himſelf to the work of the miniſtry among the Corinthians with compoſure of mind, and in confidence of the divine protection and promiſed ſucceſs. During this time, ſays Doddridge, he wrote his *Firſt Epiſtle to the Theſſalonians*, (1 Theſſ. iii. 1—6. compared with Acts xviii. 5.) which ſeems to have been *the earlieſt* of thoſe which occur in the *New Teſtament*, and quickly after it his *Second*.—Lord Barrington alſo thinks, that from hence he wrote his *Epiſtle to the Galatians*, which ſeems probable, as he refers there to his having been *but lately* among them,

months, preaching the Gospel with boldness and faithfulness. And by the divine blessing on his labours, a flourishing Church was raised, the members of which were enriched with all knowledge and utterance, and deficient in no spiritual gifts, for the variety of which they were highly distinguished.

But so great success of the Gospel could not fail of exciting the hatred and opposition of its enemies; and accordingly the malicious Jews rose in a tumultuous manner, apprehended the Apostle, and haled him before the tribunal of Gallio, preferring as a charge against him,—*This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law.* This Gallio, as Tacitus, and, from him, Calvisius reports, was brother to Seneca the moralist, Nero's tutor. Seneca, by whose interest most probably he had been made proconsul of Achaia, describes him as mild and excellent in his disposition, composed in himself, and benign and gentle to men in general; of which his treatment of St. Paul is a strong proof. For when he was about entering on his own defence, he saved him the trouble, because he did not look upon him as a criminal, by saying, *If it were a matter of wrong, or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you: but if it be a question of words, and names, and of your law, look ye to it; for I will be no judge of such matters.* After hearing this decision, they probably used many intreaties to prevail with him to interfere in the business; however, *he drave them from the judgment-seat.* When all the Greeks who were present, perceived how little the Jews were regarded, they took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, who had taken a very active part among his restless brethren, and, because he and they did not quietly depart from the court when ordered so to do, beat him violently: and, though this was an irregular proceeding, and done almost in the presence of Gallio, he connived thereat, that the trou-

(*Gal.* i. 6: iii. 1, 3; iv. 15.) and yet hints nothing of his having been there *more than once*; so that it seems to refer to the journey mentioned *Acts* xvi. 6. (*Miscell. Sacr. Abstract, p.* 31.) and have been *before that* mentioned, Acts xviii. 23. *Family Expositor*, in *loc.*

bleſome plaintiff might feel the conſequences which his own blind zeal and malignity of heart had occaſioned. The Apoſtle, thus ſcreened, tarried a few months longer; ſo that he was at Corinth about two years. Conſidering his unwearied diligence, and that he did not ſtay long in any place, unleſs he had a proſpect of great ſucceſs, we may reaſonably ſuppoſe that there he gathered a large Church, the members of which conſiſted chiefly of converts from among the idolatrous Gentiles.

Silas and Timothy ſeem ſtill to have continued at Corinth; but St. Paul, taking leave of the Chriſtian brethren there, ſailed thence into Syria, and with him Aquila and Priſcilla; having ſhorn his head in Cenchrea, the port on the eaſtern part of the iſthmus, before he entered the ſhip: for he had a vow, but on what particular occaſion we are not told. He went to Epheſus, and left his two friends there; and after ſtaying one Sabbath*, (which he employed in the ſynagogue reaſoning with the Jews, concerning the Chriſtian doctrine, and, at their earneſt requeſt for him to abide longer, had promiſed them to return,) he ſailed from that port, and landed at Cæſarea in Paleſtine. Thence he went up to Jeruſalem; and when he had ſaluted the Church there, he went to Antioch in Syria, whence he and Silas had ſet out: which concludes his Macedonian journey.

We now enter on St. Paul's Epheſian journey, ſo called becauſe he ſtayed a conſiderable while in that populous city. After he had ſpent ſome time at Antioch, he departed, taking Silas with him, and went through Galatia and Phrygia, from Church to Church, in that order in which he had founded them; *ſtrengthening all the Diſciples*, and exhorting them to ad-

* This was the ſeventh-day ſabbath, which the Jews obſerved. St. Paul did not go into the Jewiſh ſynagogues on this day, becauſe he thought the ſabbath was not ceaſed; but with a deſign to propagate the Chriſtian religion among the Jews, which could not with equal convenience be done on other days. Several Eccleſiaſtical Writers tell us, that, for a long while, ſome Chriſtians obſerved both the ſeventh day and the firſt day of the week, but did not pay the ſame regard to the former as the latter, nor ſtyle it God's Holy Day, nor the Chriſtian Sabbath.

here steadfastly to their Christian profession. As this extensive range and particular attention to the different Churches would require much time, most commentators allow *four years* for this journey, including his long residence at Ephesus; that is, from the year 54 to 58. Coming to Galatia, he gave directions concerning *charitable contributions* for poor and afflicted Christians. He directed those who had ability to assist the needy, as to the time, manner, and measure of this charity. *Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him.* They were to do it on the Lord's Day, when assembled, for public worship: every member was to *treasure up*, (so the original reads,) out of his income, whether by estate, labour, or traffic, in proportion as God had prospered him. It is the duty of ministers to recommend objects of charity to their people, and solicit assistance; who should readily contribute towards the encouragement and support of these, especially when suffering for righteousness sake. Both pastors and people should be actuated by a catholic charity; and as their love ought to extend to all, so their liberality also should be as extensive as their ability. He that has little, should gladly give of that little; and if God increase his substance, let his alms be proportionable thereto*.

While St. Paul was thus passing through Galatia and Phrygia, a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria in Egypt, went to Ephesus. His accomplishments are specified, and appear to have been very considerable. He was a master of language, had a great command of words, and in his address, spake fluently and pertinently: he was *mighty in the Scriptures* of the Old Testament, understood their meaning, could readily make use of them on all occasions, and had a singular faculty in explaining and applying them suitably. Added to these extraordinary qualifications, he was catechised or initiated in the doctrine of Christ; and being full of zeal, he preach-

* See Gouge's *Surest and Safest Way of Thriving*, with recommendatory Prefaces by Owen, Manton, Bates, and Baxter.

ed as one in earneſt, whoſe heart was in his work, and taught the things concerning Chriſt, according to his knowledge of them, for as yet it was very imperfect, *knowing only the baptiſm of John.* He entered into the ſynagogue, and delivered the truths he knew with great freedom: whom when Aquila and Priſcilla had heard, they ſoon perceived, that although he was a perſon of good parts and excellent gifts, yet he wanted a more perfect knowledge of Chriſtianity; which they themſelves had happily attained in Corinth, from the private converſation, and public miniſtry of St. Paul. Therefore they took Apollos with them to their houſe, and there explained to him the way of God in a more complete and perfect manner; and he was willing to learn of them, though mechanics. Perſons of literary attainments, who are truly humble, and ſenſible of their ignorance in divine things, will be content to learn of the meaneſt Chriſtians, who can inſtruct them: the knowledge of Chriſt is valuable, from whatever inſtrument it come.

And when he was diſpoſed to paſs into Achaia, the Brethren at Epheſus, particularly Aquila and Priſcilla, wrote to the Chriſtians in Corinth, and other parts in that province, to receive him as an uſeful miniſter of Chriſt. Having arrived, he much edified the converts in Corinth; and ſo was inſtrumental in watering, what St. Paul had been in planting: *alſo mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, that Jeſus was Chriſt.* From the peculiar gift received, he was more able to do this than convert the Heathen. Every miniſter ſhould uſe his proper talent, in the exerciſe of which ſucceſs may be expected; and not from vanity of mind, or pride of heart, aſpire after what belongs not to him. And the people ought well to conſider, that *there are diverſities of gifts, but the ſame Spirit, dividing to every man ſeverally as he will:* and not extol one miniſter, to the diſparagement of another. It appears in St. Paul's Epiſtles to the Corinthians, that ſeveral of the Chriſtians amongſt them, charmed with the eloquence of Apollos, were ready to exalt him as the head of a party, and to make invi-

dious and foolish comparisons between this Evangelist and the Apostle, who had been their father in Christ; and who, though he might have less volubility of speech, was, on the most important occasions, far superior to this eloquent and zealous teacher. Yet their blind partiality occasioned no breach between these two eminent servants of God: and to avoid even the remotest appearance of countenancing any party, which might have been formed in his own favour, left Corinth; and, when solicited to return, refused. Happy would it have been for the Christians there, had they known no name but that of Christ, in their ministers!---This account of Apollos is a digression from the History of St. Paul's travels and labours, but not unnecessary, since it tends to illustrate several passages in the Epistles, which he afterwards wrote to that Church. How remarkable is the providence of God, in leaving both Aquila and Priscilla at Ephesus, by whom Apollos was more perfectly instructed in the way of the Lord; and afterwards in sending him to Corinth, to carry on the good work which the Apostle had there begun.

St. Paul, having made his long tour, and passed through the upper coasts, which are supposed to have been Pontus and Bythinia, arrived at Ephesus*, agree-

* Ephesus was an ancient city of Ionia, situated on the river *Cayster*, about five miles from the sea, and 45 south-east of Smyrna, which rendered it the principal mart even of all the Proconsular Asia. It is seated on the side of a hill, having on the west, a prospect of a lovely plain, watered and beautified with the pleasant circles of the river, turning and winding in so many curious mazes, that some travellers have mistaken it for the *Meander*; and the name *Mendres*, which the Turks have given it, has contributed to lead them into that error. This city, where once Christianity so flourished, was adorned with a magnificent church, honoured with the name of St. John. He was the youngest of all the Apostles, and lived 70 years after Christ's death, consequently a considerable time after the destruction of Jerusalem, and died in the 98th year of his age. Being accused to Domitian the Emperor, he commanded the Proconsul of Asia to send him prisoner to Rome, where Tertullian says, he was cast into a caldron of boiling oil, but miraculously preserved from harm. Hereupon that Emperor banished him to the island of Patmos, in the Archipelago, where he wrote the Revelation. Domitian dying, Nerva, who succeeded in the Empire, set at liberty those whom his predecessor had banished. On this, St. John returned to Ephesus, where he resided a considerable time; and wrote his Gospel, and probably his Epistles also, and governed the Churches of Asia. Ephesus is now called by the Turks *Ajasalouc*, and still exhibits many relics of ancient grandeur; but the inhabitants are only a few Greek peasants, living in extreme wretchedness, dependence, and insensibility.

ably to his former promiſe, with a deſign of continuing there ſome time: this was, according to ſome chronological accounts, in leſs than a year after his departure from Corinth, and twenty-five after the aſcenſion. He fixed his ſtation there, and remained in or about the city for the ſpace of three years; and was ſucceſsful in raiſing a very flouriſhing Church. At his entrance, he found twelve Diſciples, who were acquainted only with John's baptiſm, whom he further inſtructed in the nature and privileges of the Goſpel; and, by the impoſition of hands and prayer, was inſtrumental of their receiving the miraculous gifts of the Spirit. Some think theſe were afterwards called by the Apoſtle, elders, preſbyters, or biſhops. He went into the ſynagogue and ſpake boldly for three months, (which was, as far as we know, longer than he had preached in any other,) diſcourſing on the things concerning the Meſſiah's kingdom, and rectifying their miſtaken notions thereof. But, at laſt, ſeveral of them being hardened, and refuſing to believe, openly and publicly before the multitude *ſpoke evil of that way* to everlaſting life. Hereupon, ſeparating the Diſciples he had made, from their ſociety and communion, he departed, and choſe *the ſchool of one Tyrannus,* who probably was a converted Jew, and ſome think a teacher of philoſophy,---others of intricate and difficult doctrines in divinity. There he kept his aſſembly for two years; and the learned ſay, according to different readings in two ancient MSS. he *taught five hours a day,* viz. from eleven in the morning, to four in the afternoon. As this city was much reſorted to, both by Jews and Gentiles from all parts of proconſular Aſia, and the ſchool admitted of Idolaters as well as worſhippers of the true God, very many *heard the word of the Lord Jeſus:* this probably is what is meant where he ſays, *a great door and effectual is opened unto me.---And God wrought ſpecial miracles by the hands of Paul: ſo that from his body were brought handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diſeaſes parted from them, and the evil ſpirits went out of them.* Theſe were divine ſeals ſet to the Chriſtian doctrine, inconteſtible proofs of its heavenly ori-

gin, and as ſo many arguments of his authority to preach the ſame. This was alſo an extraordinary exertion of the power of Chriſt, that the people might hereby learn how to eſtimate the Goſpel, and know, although he is perſonally in heaven, his preſence is on earth, and can, not only free men from the dominion of Satan, but heal all the moral diſtempers of the ſoul.

Several vagabond Jews, who pretended to a power of caſting out demons, particularly by ſome arts and charms derived from Solomon, attempted to imitate the Apoſtle; but this ended in their diſgrace and confuſion, and became the public talk of the city. Others of a like ſort, being moved by fear, of what had happened, went to him, confeſſing the character they had aſſumed, and the wicked deeds they had committed; while ſome of them brought their books, which contained *Epheſian Letters*, or the myſteries and inſtitutions of that pretended art; ſuch as the methods of incantation, the words to be uſed, and the proper ſeaſons when, and places where they might be exerciſed; and burned them publicly in the face of the whole city. The value whereof being computed, was found to be *fifty thouſand pieces of ſilver:* if theſe were the Jewiſh ſhekels, one, according to Dr. Arbuthnot, is equal to *two ſhillings, three pence, and three-eighths of a penny* of our money, hence the ſum would amount to 5703l. 2s. 6d. but if the *Attic drachm*, which Dr. Prideaux reckons at 9d. only to 1875l. Since authors are not agreed whether theſe *pieces* were of Roman or Greecian coin, we cannot give the aggregate with certainty. From the effects of St. Paul's preaching, as well as the uncommon miracles wrought by him for the confirmation of his doctrine, the ſacred Hiſtorian remarks, *So mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed!*

Lord Barrington ſuppoſes, that after the Apoſtle had been ſome time at Epheſus, he viſited the neighbouring towns of Aſia, thence returned to the city again; and it ſeems not improbable that the foundation of ſome others of the ſeven Churches in Aſia, ſo

particularly favoured by the Epiſtles of Jeſus Chriſt, might then be laid. About the time of this remarkable ſucceſs of the Goſpel at Epheſus, Philemon and Epaphras were converted, the latter afterwards a miniſter of the Church at Coloſſe. Several Chriſtians from different parts in the neighbourhood, viſited St. Paul while there; and it is a received opinion that he wrote his firſt Epiſtle to the Corinthians from hence at the ſame time. After continuing two years and three months in and about this city, he purpoſed to depart and go through Macedonia and Achaia, to viſit the Churches he had planted in thoſe countries, thence to Jeruſalem, after that to Rome, and laſtly to Spain. No Cæſar, no Alexander the Great, nor other Hero, ſays a writer, comes up to the magnanimity of this little Benjamite. Faith and love to God and man had enlarged his heart, even as the ſand of the ſea. So he ſent Timothy, and Eraſtus, (this is the firſt time we have heard of the latter,) into Macedonia, to acquaint the Churches there of his coming, and perhaps with orders to deſire them to provide ſome contributions for the ſaints in Judea. But contrary to his firſt intention, he continued nine months longer, which made the whole *three years.*

Towards the latter end of which time, one Demetrius, who made ſilver ſhrines for Diana, and perhaps had already ſuffered loſs, called together a large company of men who were of the ſame trade, to whom he expreſſed his alarm at the great progreſs of the Goſpel, and fear leſt the craft ſhould fail, by the goddeſs ſinking into diſrepute. This repreſentation, both of their trade and religion being in danger, anſwered every purpoſe he intended, for immediately they were full of wrath*, fury, and indignation, and cried out, ſaying, *Great is Diana of the Epheſians**; to ſhew their

* The Greek word θυμοῦ ſignifies *a hot and fiery anger.*

† As Diana was known by a variety of titles and characters, as the goddeſs of hunting, travelling, child-birth, inchantments, &c. as Luna, Hecate, Lucina, Proſerpine, &c. ſhe had undoubtedly, in one or other of theſe views, a vaſt number of votaries. Her temple was 220 years in building, 425 feet long, 220 broad, ſupported by 127 marble pillars, each of them 60 feet high, and the work of a King; this was reared at the common charge of Aſia Propria, and

abhorrence of St. Paul's doctrine, and that they were resolved to support her honour and majesty. Presently the city was in an uproar and filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius, who was born in Derbe, but had lived in Macedonia, and Aristarchus of Thessalonica in the same province, companions of Paul, as it was probably the time of celebrating the games in honour of Diana, they rushed with them into the theatre, that there they might abuse, or, as some say, affright them with wild beasts. The courage and generosity of the Apostle prompted him to enter also, either to make an apology for them, or to expose his own life, rather than suffer his friends to be sacrificed on his account: but the Disciples permitted him not. And certain of the Asiarchs or Primates of Asia, who were either persons sent from the smaller cities, as procurators in public business, similar to our solicitors; or officers presiding over the theatre, many of whom were priests, because most of the plays were acted in honour of the gods; sent him a message, which is a proof of their candour, desiring him not to venture in. The crowd was in great confusion, some crying one thing, some another, and the greater part knew not who had begun the tumult, nor for what purpose: yet the silversmiths were not unacquainted therewith. The Jews seeing Alexander, who also was a Jew, and, some think, the coppersmith, (a violent judaizing Christian, consequently one of the greatest enemies of St. Paul, and most in favour with them of any who professed Christianity,) prevailed with him to make an apology for them; and he endeavoured to turn the rage of the multitude against Paul and the other Christians. Apostates are usually the bittereſt persecutors *; but when

was accounted one of the seven wonders of the world. It was burned down on the day in which Socrates was poisoned; then again, on the night when Alexander the Great was born, by Erostratus, purely that he might be remembered in after ages; and destroyed the last time in the reign of Constantine, pursuant to the edict of that emperor, commanding all the Heathen temples to be demolished.

* Apostates are the bittereſt enemies to those from whom they go out.—Alexander first *put away a good conscience*, and then *made shipwreck of faith*. If the conscience be defiled by sin, the mind will soon be corrupted with error; *the mystery of faith must be held in a good conscience*. For his apostacy, St

the idolatrous Pagans knew that he was a Jew, conſequently an enemy to their worſhip as well as the Chriſtians, they would not ſuffer him to ſpeak, and to prevent his being heard, ſhould he attempt, with one voice, for about the ſpace of two hours, they cried out, as before, *Great is Diana of the Epheſians!* But though he was hereby prevented in public, he afterwards did the Apoſtle and the Chriſtian intereſt conſiderable harm by his private treachery. However at laſt the town-clerk, whom ſome Expoſitors think was the perſon appointed to keep a regiſter of the public games, of the names of the victors, and of the prizes won, appeaſed the people, and prevailed with them to be ſilent. Then in a ſpeech, from which he appears to have been a perſon of conſiderable prudence and ability, he intimated in a few words, that there certainly was no need of a public declaration of their being votaries of *Diana*, ſince this was known to all; that the perſons accuſed were not guilty of any breach of the law, nor any public offence,--had offered no violence to the Temple of the Goddeſs, nor ſo much as ſet a foot therein; that if they were, this was not a legal method of proceeding, as court days were held, and deputies appointed, for that purpoſe; and that they themſelves were in danger of being complained of as a factious ſeditious people. They were under the Roman Emperor, and making a general tumult, unleſs in caſe of fire, inundations, or the ſudden invaſion of an enemy, expoſed them to the loſs of their charter. And he put them in mind, that the time aggravated their danger, this happening upon the ac-

Paul excommunicated him, by which he was ſo exaſperated, that he *did him much evil.*

Thus grace abuſed brings forth the fouleſt deeds,
As richeſt ſoil the moſt luxuriant weeds. *Cowper.*

He alſo *delivered him unto Satan, that he might learn not to blaſpheme*, i.e. for the devil to torment and terrify him, that he might learn not to revile Chriſt and his Goſpel, but be brought to repentance, and ſaved in the day of the Lord. 1 Tim. i. 19, 20. 2 Tim. iv 14. The ſevereſt cenſures in the Primitive Church, were primarily deſigned for the ſalvation, and not the deſtruction of the offenders: and that was happily the caſe with the inceſtuous perſon, of whom we read, 1 Cor. v. 5.

cession of the new emperor Nero: and having thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly.

By this means, delivered from the danger which threatened him, St. Paul called together the Disciples, and took his leave of them in an affectionate manner; and, as Timothy had returned, left him to superintend the Church there; while he, according to his former purpose, departed, and went into Macedonia. When he had visited the Churches at Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, &c. exhorting and comforting them*, he went into Greece, or that eminent part thereof, called Achaia, of which Corinth was the capital, and there continued three months. It is thought, during this time, that he wrote his celebrated Epistle to the Romans; for it plainly appears, that was written before his imprisonment at Rome, for in this he speaks of a *collection* made by the Churches of Macedonia and Achaia, with which he was hastening to Jerusalem, which fixes it to that time. And also that he wrote his first Epistle to Timothy, whom some of the Ephesians would not obey, while others attempted to force themselves upon him as bishops and ministers; so that the Epistle is St. Paul's commission, to the Ephesians as well as to Timothy†.

Having on a former occasion sailed from Cenchrea into Syria, the Apostle intended to have done the same; but hearing that the Jews laid in wait, either to rob him of the monies, which at his request had been collected in the Macedonian and Grecian Churches, for the relief of the poor saints in Judea, or to kill him, he changed his course, purposing to return through Macedonia the way he had come. Sopater or Sosipater of Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus, of Thessalonica; Gaius, of Derbe, and Timothy, who

* The original word παρακαλέσας signifies both exhortation and consolation. Acts xx. 2. This tour would of course take up several months, during which he met with Titus, who brought him a pleasing account of the Christians at Corinth; 2 Cor. vii. 5—7. whose liberality in assisting the contribution he was then raising for the poor Believers in Judea, he mentioned to excite the Macedonians to imitate them. 2 Cor. ix. 2. viii. 1—14. The *Second Epistle to the Corinthians* was therefore written from Macedonia at that time, and was sent by Titus, who returned to get the collection in still greater forwardness.

† See 1 Tim i. 3, 18; iv. 6, 12, 13; v. 21, 22.

had left Epheſus; and Tychicus and Trophimus, of Aſia*, went before, and tarried of St. Paul, and Luke the ſacred Hiſtorian, at Troas; who, after the feaſt of the Paſſover at Jeruſalem was ended, ſailed from Philippi, and in five days joined them; where they continued a week.

The day before they departed being the Chriſtian Sabbath, when the Diſciples aſſembled for public worſhip, particularly for the celebration of the Lord's Supper, the Apoſtle preached to them, and continued his ſermon until midnight. Probably to obviate an objection of the Pagans, who maliciouſly propagated that the Chriſtians held meetings in the night for the purpoſe of committing acts of wickedneſs, the ſacred Hiſtorian obſerves concerning the upper chamber wherein they aſſembled, that there were many lights therein. During this long diſcourſe, a young man called Eutychus, who ſat in a window, doubtleſs kept open, to prevent heat, both from the lamps, and the number of people, being overpowered with ſleep, fell from the third loft, and was taken up dead; whom the Apoſtle, by ſtretching himſelf upon the body, in imitation of the prophets Elijah and Eliſha, miraculouſly reſtored to life. After taking ſome refreſhment, and converſing with the Diſciples, even till break of day, he departed.

He deſired his companions to go by ſea to Aſſos, a ſea-port town of Myſia, on the Aſiatic coaſt, called alſo Apollonia; while he himſelf choſe to go by land, and alone. He had his own reaſons for this; probably that he might inſtruct ſome in the principles of Chriſtianity on the way, or enjoy more free and full communion with God. Solitude is neceſſary, and peculiarly acceptable to a pious Miniſter of the Goſpel, that he may more accurately inquire into the will of God, receive the truth as from his lips, enter more fully into the divine life, and implore ſucceſs on his miniſterial labours. And the moſt holy Chriſtian

* The ſeveral perſons here mentioned ſome think were joined with St. Paul, as meſſengers of the Churches, in carrying their contributions to the poor Brethren at Jeruſalem. Compare 1 Cor. xvi. 3, 4; and 2 Cor. viii. 19—23.

cannot always be easy in the best company, he must sometimes be alone, to engage in such devotional exercises, which it would not be proper to do in the presence of his most intimate friends. *When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.* Not that I would confine the pure enjoyments of religion to places of retirement, nor say that he who secludes himself from the public walks of life is a pious man:

> Truth is not local, God alike pervades
> And fills the world of traffic and the shades,
> And may be fear'd amidst the busiest scenes,
> Or scorn'd where business never intervenes. *Cowper.*

When our path is illumined from above, the wilderness becomes pleasant as the land of promise; or in the most numerous assemblies, or greatest cities, we are recollected, and find a hermitage everywhere.

On his arrival at Assos, he went on board the ship in which his companions were, and sailed thence to Mitylene*, a considerable sea-port in the island of Lesbos, which is one of the largest in the Archipelago. They sailed thence, and the next day got opposite Chios†, a noted island between Lesbos and Samos; the day after, arrived at Samos, a famous island of Ionia, about five miles from the Asiatic continent, and tarried a while at Trogyllium, a promontory not

* From this city, the whole island is now called *Metelin*, which lies about seven miles from the main land of Troas, and near the mouth of the Hellespont. on which account it is thought worthy of a fortress, and the defence of the Ottoman sword. It is memorable for Sappho, the inventress of Sapphic verses; Alcæus, a famous lyric poet; Pittacus, one of the seven wise men of Greece; Theophrastus, a noble physician and philosopher; and Arion, a celebrated musician.

† Chios or Scio lies parallel with Smyrna, and is reckoned not more than four leagues from the Asiatic continent. It is about 50 miles in length, and 25 in breadth, mountainous and of a poor soil, and called by the Turks, *Saki Adassi*, i. e. Mastic-island, with which article it supplies the royal seraglio. This gum, which is chewed by the Turkish ladies, in order to preserve their teeth clean, and their breath sweet, is collected by the Christian inhabitants of the island: who, as as a remuneration for it, are exempted from half the poll-tax. Sir Paul Rycaut says, that in no place of the Turkish dominions do the Christians enjoy more freedom in their religion and estates; to which they are entitled by the articles of capitulation made with Sultan Mahomet II. so that a Turk cannot abuse a Christian without severe correction.

far from Samos*; and the day following landed at Miletus†, a ſea-port on the continent of Ionia, near Epheſus. While here, St. Paul ſent for the Elders of the Epheſian Church, to whom he addreſſed a diſcourſe, which began in ſofteſt words of inſinuating eloquence, continued in expreſſions of moſt paſſionate affection, and concluded with a ſolemn valediction and moving prayer, which affected all the tender paſſions of nature. There are three things chiefly obſervable therein,—his vindication of himſelf—his exhortation to thoſe miniſters—his recommendation of all his hearers to God and the word of his grace. *And,* not only a part, but, *they all wept ſore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kiſſed him. Sorrowing moſt of all* for ſome words he had ſpoken, intimating *that they ſhould ſee his face no more.* The final loſs of a faithful miniſter, is the occaſion of great ſorrow to a pious people.

Accompanying him to the ſhip, he had to force himſelf away from them; after which, looſing from Miletus, he and his company ſailed with a ſtraight courſe to Coos‡, a large iſland in the mouth of the Archipelago, 70 miles in circumference, and 20 from the Aſiatic ſhore. On the ſucceeding day they landed at Rhodes§, an iſland in the Mediterranean, famous

* Samos was once powerful, rich, and populous; but it is ſo reduced by the Turks, that a few pirates dare land and plunder it as they pleaſe. In this iſland was *Pythagoras* born, one of the fathers of philoſophy, which he carried into Greece, and thence into Italy.

† Miletus is memorable for being the birth-place of *Thales*, one of the ſeven wiſe men of Greece, and founder of the *Ionic* ſect of philoſophy; as alſo for the birth of Anaximander his ſcholar, Timotheus the muſician, and Anaximenes the philoſopher. At preſent this place is called by the Turks *Melas*; not far from which is the famous river Mæander, which, though it encircles the plains through which it runs, with innumerable mazes and windings, yet in ſome places rolls with a very rapid and impetuous current.

‡ Coos, or Cos, now commonly called *Lango*, was one of the iſlands of of the Cyclades, famous for the worſhip of Eſculapius, and the Temple of Juno. There alſo Hippocrates, the prince of phyſicians, and Apelles, the celebrated painter, were born; the former of whom flouriſhed at the time of the Peloponneſian war; and the latter in the time of Alexander the Great.

§ Rhodes was reckoned formerly one of the principal univerſities of the Roman empire; along with Marſeilles, Tarſus, Athens, and Alexandria. It was celebrated among the ancients for the clearneſs of its atmoſphere; ſome of them ſay, that there is not a day in the whole year, wherein the Sun

for the brazen Coloſſus, erected by Demetrius, king of Aſia. in honour of the Sun, which the Iſlanders worſhipped. Sailing thence, they touched next at Patara, a port and the chief city of Lycia, 80 miles eaſt; beautified with many temples, of which one was dedicated to Apollo, whoſe oracle therein, for credit and wealth, was not much inferior to that of Delphi. Finding a ſhip bound for Phœnicia, they went on board, and, leaving Cyprus on the left, ſailed for Syria, and arrived at Tyre*, where ſhe was to unlade.

Though our Saviour was ſeveral times near this city, yet he never entered, to make Diſciples; but afterwards his Goſpel was carried thither, and proved ſucceſsful. St. Paul, and his companions, tarried there ſeven days; finding ſome Diſciples, who, through the ſpirit of prophecy, foreſeeing the danger to which he would be expoſed at Jeruſalem, attempted to diſſuade him from going to that city. But neither their predictions, nor intreaties prevailing, they, with their wives and children, accompanied their kind viſitants to the ſhore, who, before they ſeparated, kneeled down and prayed.

Thence they ſailed to Ptolemais†, 28 miles ſouth; ſituated on one of the fineſt bays on that coaſt, in the

does not ſhine there. Hence there was erected, acroſs the mouth of the harbour, and conſecrated to the Sun, a vaſt ſtatue of braſs, called *Coloſſus*, 70 cubits high, ſo that the ſhips ſailed between its legs; it was conſidered as one of the ſeven wonders of the world. Some tell us, the artificers were 12 years in making it; 66 years after its erection it was thrown down by a terrible earthquake, and lay ſeveral hundred years. Afterwards, on the city being taken, the Saracens carried it into Egypt, loading 900 camels therewith.

* Tyre was an ancient city and port, and famous for its trade and colonies, and the greateſt mart of the Eaſt. After a ſiege of 13 years, it was deſtroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. Another built near it, flouriſhed much in the time of the Perſian monarchy; but Alexander the Great, about 300 years before Chriſt, though almoſt inſurmountable difficulties lay in his way, in the ſpace of ſeven months, took and ſacked it. Eight thouſand men were ſlain in the ſackage, thirty thouſand ſold for ſlaves, two thouſand crucified, and, according to the prophetic declaration, the city was devoured with fire. For a farther account of this remarkable event, ſee Iſa. xxiii. Ezek. xxvi. Zach. ix. 1—8. Rollin's Ancient Hiſtory, vol. 6. ſec. 7. and Prideaux's Con. P. 1. b. 7; with Brown's Harmony, chap. 2. It was afterwards repaired, and, when St. Paul was there, rather ſtately: but now it lies in ruins, being a mean town, ſubject to the Turks, and by them called *El porta del Zur*, the haven of Zur.

† Polemais is an ancient city, which, on a diviſion of the land, fell by lot to the tribe of Aſher; its name was *Accho*, Judg. i. 31. It was the ſcene of many celebrated actions in the holy war. The Turks, who are now maſters of

neighbourhood of Mount Carmel; which had been enlarged and beautiſied by Ptolemæus Philadelphus, king of Egypt, about 250 years before Chriſt, from whence it had its name. After ſaluting the Chriſtian brethren there, and continuing with them one day, they went to Cæſarea *Stratonis*, but whether by ſea or land we cannot determine; and that being the reſidence of Philip the Evangeliſt, they abode with him many days. During which time, there arrived a certain prophet, named Agabus, who, for having foretold a famine, which happened in the time of Claudius, was held in high eſteem. And as it was uſual with the Prophets of old, to exemplify their prophecies by ſignificant ſymbols, that thereby they might make a deeper impreſſion, he took Paul's girdle, bound his own hands and feet, and ſaid, *Thus ſaith the Holy Ghoſt, So ſhall the Jews at Jeruſalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and ſhall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.* On hearing this, the Apoſtles, his companions, the Diſciples in Cæſarea, moſt earneſtly and affectionately, even with tears, intreated him not to proceed as he intended. But they were unable to prevail: he told them they might, by their expreſſions of love, and anxiety for his ſafety, occaſion much diſtreſs of mind, but not cauſe him to yield, and violate his own conſcience; and, ſo far from dreading the ſufferings before him, *he was ready not to be bound only, but alſo to die at Jeruſalem, for the name of the Lord Jeſus.* That he might defend the Goſpel, and promote the glory of its Author, were the things he had chiefly in view; and for the accompliſhment thereof, he feared neither ſufferings nor death in any form. Having a firm truſt on God, a lively faith in Chriſt, a divine peace in his own conſcience, his affections weaned from the world, and a

all that region, call it *Acra* or *Acre*, which is nearer its old Hebrew name; and, when Maundrel was there, in 1697, it was a heap of ruins; but has again revived by the induſtry of Daher; and the works erected by Djezzar, in our own time, have rendered it one of the principal towns on that coaſt.—In 1799, aided by the Britiſh, under Sir W. S. Smith, it withſtood a ſevere ſiege by the French, under General Bonaparte, who raiſed the ſiege after failing in a twelfth aſſault, made over the putrid bodies of his ſoldiers.

well-grounded hope of heaven; he had nothing to fear but every good to expect in the world to come.

After making up their baggage, (which contained the alms they were carrying,) some of the Disciples of Cæsarea went with them to Jerusalem, and conducted them to one Mnason of Cyprus, an old Disciple, at whose house they lodged. They met with a pleasing reception from the Christian brethren*; and on the succeeding day St. Paul and his companions visited James, (commonly distinguished by *the Less*,) who it seems was the only Apostle then resident at Jerusalem, and presiding over the Churches in Judea: at this interview all the ordinary stated ministers were present. After this salutation, he recited to them his labours and success, both among the idolatrous and proselyte Gentiles; for which they rendered the praise and glory to God; and reciprocally acquainted him with the success the Gospel had among the circumcised, saying, *Thou seest, brother, how many thousands*† *of Jews there are which believe.* Well might our Saviour compare his religion to *a grain of mustard seed*, seeing it had so extensively spread in so short a time. Its beginning was small, the instruments apparently mean, the prejudices and obstinacy of the Jews very great, and yet, in about twenty years after the ascension, the number of those who believed, had embraced it, and were at one time in the same city, was stated at several thousands.

From the beginning of the Christian mission to that time, Jerusalem continued, not only the central place, but the principal seat of this religion; and, it is surprising that the believing Jews attended to the ceremonial part of the law of Moses! St. Paul taught those who were dispersed into other countries, and believed, that it was abrogated by the death of Christ; and, therefore, by the most punctual attention thereto, no man could be justified. He acquainted the unconverted

* Ἀσμένως smilingly, or with a cheerful countenance.

† The Greek word is μυριάδες *myriads*; by these Lardner supposes to be intended chiefly the Church at Jerusalem; but Benson and Doddridge think these numerous converts were, most of them, Jews, dispersed in other countries; who were come up to Jerusalem to worship at some of the great festivals; and afterwards returned to their respective countries.

Gentiles alſo; that they had no concern with it, and ought not to ſubmit to thoſe rites. While at the ſame time, he enjoined both of theſe to obſerve the precepts of the moral law eſtabliſhed in the hands of the Mediator, whoſe death is the procuring cauſe of a ſinner's juſtification, for he is *the Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world.*

Now it appears that the *liberty* of the Goſpel had not been ſufficiently explained to the Jewiſh converts in Jeruſalem; or they did not believe their teachers; therefore indulged unfavourable thoughts of St. Paul, by reaſon of the inſtructions he had given concerning the non-obſervance of the ceremonies of the law. To obviate their prejudice, the Apoſtle James, and the Elders, prevailed upon him, contrary to his own judgment, to engage in a vow of Nazariteſhip; hence he and four more expended money, in buying lambs, rams, oil, flour, and other things required by the law, and ſhaved their heads to ſhow that it was accompliſhed. The Jews, ſeeing him in the Temple, and ſuppoſing that he had brought into the inner part of the court with him, Trophimus, who was a Gentile Chriſtian of Epheſus, whom they had ſeen in the city, ſtirred up all the people, apprehended, and, in a riotous manner, dragged him out, immediately ſhut the doors that he might not take ſanctuary at the horns of the altar, and were on the point of killing him, when captain *Lyſias*, from the caſtle *Antonia*, arrived, and providentially ſaved his life. He made him a priſoner, commanded him to be bound with two chains, one probably on his hands, and another on his feet; which was the accompliſhment of the prophecy of Agabus; and not being able, on account of the confuſion among the multitude, to get a right underſtanding of the affair, ordered him to the caſtle.

In the way, when he had got upon the ſtairs that led from the cloiſters of the temple, by the permiſſion of the Captain, he made his defence to the Jews, who heard with attention until he aſſerted his miſſion to the Gentiles, upon which they became ſo enraged, that the guard of ſoldiers were commanded to carry

him forward. Suppoſing him to be a notorious offender, and that he might extort a confeſſion of his crime, the Captain gave orders that he ſhould be ſcourged; but, as they were binding him to a poſt or column, with thongs or pieces of leather, he pleaded the privilege of a Roman citizen, by which he prevented it.

On the ſucceeding day, his chains were taken off, the members of the Sanhedrim called, and he placed before them for examination, that the Captain might learn what charge they had againſt him. In the beginning of his defence, he aſſerted, that *he had lived in all good conſcience before God until that day;* which ſo exaſperated his accuſers and judges, that the high-prieſt Ananias commanded thoſe who ſtood near him, to ſmite him on the mouth. This indignity was contrary to all laws of decency and order, and ſhows what ſort of ſpirit actuated thoſe rulers. The Apoſtle ſaid to him, *God ſhall ſmite thee, thou whited wall; for ſitteſt thou to judge me after the law, and commandeſt me to be ſmitten contrary to the law**. Perceiving that one part of the council was Sadducees, and the other Phariſees, he cried aloud in the hearing of the whole court, *I am a Phariſee, the ſon of a Phariſee: of the hope and reſurrection of the dead I am called in queſtion.* Upon this the Council divided, and the diſſenſion growing great, the Captain, to reſcue the Apoſtle from danger, ordered a ſufficient number of ſoldiers peremptorily to take him back to the caſtle.

Early the next morning, more than forty of the unbelieving Jews, entered into a conſpiracy, binding

* Ananias was the ſon of *Nebedæus*, and, by his ſtation, head of the Sanhedrim. The expreſſion *thou whited wall*, when applied to men, is a paraphraſis of an hypocrite, and ſo is as if he had ſaid *thou hypocrite. God ſhall ſmite thee*, is not an imprecation, but a minatory prediction, not a deſire of revenge, but a prophecy of judgment from God upon him. He had before, been ſent in chains to Rome, to anſwer to Claudius Cæſar for his behaviour in a quarrel which had happened between the Jews and Samaritans, during the government of Cumanus in Judea; but being acquitted, probably at the interceſſion of Agrippa the younger, he returned to Jeruſalem, and ſtill enjoyed the dignity of the high-prieſthood. And five years after his inſolent conduct to St. Paul, *God* did remarkably *ſmite* him: for after his own houſe had been reduced to aſhes, in a tumult begun by his own ſon, he was ſeized and taken in the royal palace; where, having in vain attempted to hide himſelf in an old aqueduct, he was dragged out and ſlain by a Jewiſh captain.

themſelves, by a ſolemn anathema, neither to eat nor drink until they had killed him. But on the preceding night, the Lord ſtood by him, and ſaid, *Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou haſt teſtified of me in Jeruſalem, ſo muſt thou bear witneſs alſo at Rome.* The conſpirators, being confident of the approbation and aſſiſtance of the chief members of the Council, informed them of their deſign. The plan concerted was, that the Council ſhould intreat the Captain to bring the Apoſtle to the bar on the day following, for a further examination; and that they, lying in the way from the caſtle to the temple, would kill him.

A diſcovery of this being made, and St. Paul's nephew hearing thereof, told him, who, calling the Captain of the guard, deſired he would take the young man to Lyſias, he having ſomething of importance to relate to him. He readily complied, the chief Captain behaved to the youth with much tenderneſs and condeſcenſion; and from his information, fruſtrated the whole ſcheme. For he immediately called two centurions, and commanded them to get ready 200 ſoldiers, alſo 70 horſemen, with 200 pikemen for their protection, at three o'clock in the morning, and carry the priſoner to Felix*, the Roman governor of Judea, who chiefly reſided in Cæſarea. With the commander of the detachment, he ſent a letter to Felix, ſtating the priſoner's caſe. Accordingly the ſoldiers conveyed him by night to Antipatris†, which was about 38 miles, and half-way to Cæſarea. There they halted; and apprehending no more danger from the

* The Roman hiſtorians ſay, that Felix was a man of mean birth, he and his brother *Pallas* being born ſlaves. The latter became a great favorite of the emperor Claudius, and continued to have intereſt alſo in Nero's court; and by his influence got his brother advanced to be governor of Judea. Felix was a wicked and tyrannical man: he ſent aſſaſſins into the family of Jonathan the high-prieſt, (who had reproved him for his covetuouſneſs, injuſtice, and taking bribes;) and mixing with the ſervants, they raiſed a tumult and killed him. The Jews accuſed him before Nero of many outrages, and, if Pallas had not interpoſed in his favour, he had certainly been ruined.

† Antipatris had formerly been called *Caphar Salama*, (*Macc.* vii. 31.) but being rebuilt, or repaired, by Herod the Great, it was by him named *Antipatris*, in honour of his father *Antipater*. Its diſtance from Jeruſalem, ſome think rendered the journey too far for one night's march, and conclude, that the ſoldiers only travelled by *night*, and reſted in the day.

conſpirators, the foot returned to the caſtle, and left the horſemen to proceed; who, as ſoon as they arrived, delivered the letter and the priſoner, thus diſcharging themſelves of all further truſt. And now what Chriſt had ſaid to his Diſciples was verified in this Apoſtle, *Ye ſhall be brought before governors and kings for my ſake.*

At Rome, the plaintiff had ſix hours allowed to accuſe, and the defendant nine to make his anſwer: Felix, knowing this, would not enter upon St. Paul's trial, until his accuſers arrived from Jeruſalem. After five days Ananias the high-prieſt, with the principal members of the Council arrived, and employed one Tertullus, whom ſome writers ſay was an Italian by birth, well ſkilled in the Roman law, and of great celebrity for his readineſs and eloquence in ſpeaking, to plead their cauſe. This orator brought three charges againſt the Apoſtle—*ſedition, hereſy,* and a *profanation of the temple;* who returned ſeparate anſwers to each. Felix, having heard both parties, put them off to another time, ſaying, When I am better informed concerning this ſect, and the chief captain Lyſias is here, I will inquire more narrowly into this affair. And he commanded the centurion to keep Paul, as a priſoner at large, and to prohibit none of his acquaintance from ſending him food, books, or other accommodations, or viſiting him in perſon.

After he had been kept ſome days in this gentle confinement at Cæſarea, Felix, who had been abſent for a ſhort time, returning thither again, with Druſilla his wife*, who was a Jeweſs, ſent for him, to give an account of his religion, and, after hearing, endeavoured to acquaint himſelf therewith. The Apoſtle, knowing the characters of the perſons whom he had to

* Druſilla was the daughter of Herod Agrippa, and one of the fineſt women of that age. She had been married to *Azizus*, king of *Emeſſa*, who ſubmitted to circumciſion, and ſo embraced Judaiſm, as the condition of the nuptials. Felix, enamoured with her beauty, employed one Simon, a wicked Jew, who profeſſed himſelf a magician, to perſuade her to abandon her huſband, and marry him, though a heathen; to which ſhe conſented. She was afterwards, with a ſon ſhe had by Felix, conſumed in an irruption of Mount *Veſuvius*, See *Joſeph. Antiq. lib.* 20. *cap.* 7.

addreſs, uſed not the ſtudied eloquence of Tertullus, but with plainneſs and the energy of divine truth reaſoned of righteouſneſs, temperance, and judgment to come, which moved, terrified*, and confounded the governor, while the heart of the partner of his crimes ſeemed callous. She had been accuſtomed to hear of a future judgment, as Biſhop Atterbury excellently obſerves: perhaps ſhe alſo truſted to her being a daughter of *Abraham*, or to the expiation of the law, and therefore was proof againſt the convictions which ſeized her huſband, though a Heathen. Let this teach us to guard againſt all ſuch falſe dependencies as thoſe, which tend to elude convictions, that might otherwiſe be produced in us, by the faithful preaching of the word of God. Let us ſtop our ears againſt thoſe meſſengers of Satan, who appear as angels of light, and would teach us to reconcile the hope of ſalvation with a corrupt heart or an unholy life†.

Felix diſmiſſed the Apoſtle; intimating that he would, at ſome future opportunity call for him, and hear more fully his doctrine in private. This probably might be his intention: he however afterwards ſent frequently, and communed with him: but with what deſign? to be inſtructed in the knowledge of Chriſtianity? ſo far from this, he expected money would have been given him for the liberty of ſo able a miniſter, and, waiting for that, fell ſhort of the treaſure of the Goſpel. Seeing covetouſneſs was the ſpring of his humanity to St. Paul, it is ſomewhat ſtrange, that the proſecutors did not bribe him to act with vigour againſt the object of their hatred.

When he had been more than two years a priſoner in Cæſarea, Nero took the Government of Judea out of the hand of Felix, and nominated Portius Feſtus as his ſucceſſor. Now about three days after he had begun to govern the province, he went from Cæſarea to the metropolis, in conformity to the Roman law, and in order to make himſelf acquainted with the

* Felix *trembled*, ἔμφοβος, he was *in fear*, or wholly made up of fear; his awakened *conſcience* ſaid *amen* to St. Paul's reaſonings.

† See Biſhop Atterbury's Sermon on Acts xxiv. 25.

state of their public affairs. There the high-priest, and the chief of the Jews, who had been Paul's prosecutors before Felix, endeavoured, by misrepresentation, to prejudice him against this Apostle; and desired, that he would send for him to Jerusalem; *laying an ambush* of desperate wretches, to intercept his journey, and *kill him by the way.* But he, anxious to preserve the Imperial privileges, denied their request; informing them, that he himself would depart shortly to Cæsarea, and those of them who were able to manage the prosecution in a legal manner, might go thither also to the bar of Nero. Thus was he the means of preserving St. Paul's life. By what invisible springs, and with what silence, wisdom, and energy, does God govern the world!

When Festus had tarried about ten days, he returned to his seat of Government; and, as expedition in administering justice is commendable, he, the day after, on the arrival of the accusers, sitting on the seat of judgment, commanded Paul to be brought to the bar. At this crisis his prosecutors flocked round him, and with their envenomed tongues, laid many grievous accusations to his charge, similar to those produced before Felix; but their assertions, though bold, were insufficient to substantiate their charges; from which, the accused, with the greatest ease, vindicated himself. The faithful servants of Christ are happy in their own innocence, and their enemies render themselves odious in accusing them falsely.

Felix, to palliate his injustice and tyranny in governing the Jews, *left Paul bound;* and Festus, to conciliate their esteem, asked him, saying, *Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me?* But justly apprehensive of the danger that would attend being sent thither, he rejected the proposal, claimed the privilege of a Roman, and appealed to Cæsar. This, for the present, concluded the business; and the prosecutors lost all hope of accomplishing his death. What the Jewish doctors said concerning Job is applicable here, viz. that the Devil was more cha-

grined at his inability to take away his life, than this patient man was with all his afflictions.

Some days after this, king Agrippa*, and Bernice† his ſiſter, viſited Feſtus, and congratulated him on his advancement to the government of the province. When they had been there many days, feaſting and indulging in mirth, Feſtus entertained the King with a relation of Paul's trial, and perhaps aſked his advice; becauſe the Romans had then no laws againſt the Chriſtians: they were looked upon as a ſect of the Jews, and provided they injured no man in civil rights, nor made any diſturbance in the ſtate, were protected by the Roman laws. As Agrippa underſtood the Jewiſh cuſtoms and privileges, he was a proper perſon to conſult, conſequently able to direct Feſtus how to form his charge againſt the priſoner, in ſo uncommon and remarkable a caſe. And whether to oblige him, or excited by curioſity to ſee ſo eminent a Chriſtian teacher, he deſired to hear St. Paul; and Feſtus promiſed he ſhould on the morrow.

All the chief officers, both military and civil, attended the governor, and his royal gueſts, who had a numerous and ſplendid train, making a moſt pompous and magnificent appearance. When they were ſeated, Paul being ordered came forth, having his chains on; Feſtus, in a ſhort ſpeech, ſhowed the occaſion of the

* This was the ſon of Herod Agrippa who killed the apoſtle James and was eaten of worms at Cæſarea. Claudius had made him King of Chalcis: he was by profeſſion a Jew, had the power of the temple, and the ſacred treaſury, and could likewiſe diſpoſe of the high-prieſthood as he thought proper.

† Bernice, his ſiſter, was the eldeſt daughter of Herod Aprippa, and ſiſter to Druſilla the wife of Felix. In her infancy ſhe had been contracted, by Claudius, to Mark, ſon of Alexander Lyſimachus, the Alabarch; but, he dying before the marriage was conſummated, her father married her to his own brother Herod, king of Chalcis, though that was contrary to the law of Moſes. After his death, ſhe went to her brother Agrippa, with whom ſhe lived in a ſcandalous familiarity. To wipe off this aſperſion, ſhe offered herſelf to Polemon, king of Cilicia, upon condition that he would become a *proſelyte of righteouſneſs*; who conſenting to be circumciſed, married her. But ſhe continued not long with her huſband, which occaſioned his caſting off the Jewiſh religion; and returned to live in inceſt with her brother. Being beautiful, ſhe afterwards inſinuated herſelf into the affections of Titus Veſpaſian, of which Tacitus and Suetonius ſpeak; and as he paſſionately loved her, would have made her empreſs, had not the clamours of the Romans prevented it.

meeting, alſo juſtified the priſoner before that illuſtrious aſſembly; and requeſted advice, particularly from Agrippa, that he might better ſtate his caſe to the Emperor. That the King might be able to form a right judgment, he ſaid to Paul, *Thou art permitted to ſpeak for thyſelf.* Stretching forth his hand, he entered on his defence: and after refuting the accuſations of the Jews, declaring his former unbelief and cruelty to the Chriſtians, and avowing his miraculous converſion and divine call to the apoſtleſhip; while enlarging upon the faith of the Goſpel, particularly, that *Chriſt ſhould be the firſt that ſhould riſe from the dead, and ſhould ſhew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles,* Feſtus interrupted him, by ſaying with a loud voice, *Paul, thou art beſide thyſelf; much learning doth make thee mad.* i. e. To talk of the reſurrection of a man who is dead and buried, and to ſay that he appeared to, and ordained thee a miniſter and witneſs, that he is the Saviour of the world, and would enlighten, not only his own barbarous nation the Jews, but even the Gentiles, and, amongſt others, the polite and learned Romans and Greeks, all this is mere fancy, and the effect of a diſtracted imagination.

After refuting the charge, with modeſty, politeneſs, and reſpect, he turned again to the royal perſonage, and ſaid, *King Agrippa, believeſt thou the prophets? I know that thou believeſt.* This direct and bold appeal, ſo ſeized, affected, and overpowered the King, that he could ſcarcely make any reſiſtance; but replied, *I am but a little from being perſuaded to be a Chriſtian:* which is an acknowledgement that the reaſons and proofs advanced in favour of Chriſtianity were convincing. A writer very pertinently ſays, See here, *Feſtus* altogether an Heathen, *Paul* altogether a Chriſtian, *Agrippa* halting between both. Poor *Agrippa!* but almoſt perſuaded? ſo near the mark, and yet fall ſhort! another ſtep and thou art within the veil. Reader, ſtop not with *Agrippa,* but go on with *Paul;* whoſe heavy chains Chriſtianity rendered light and tolerable,—theſe were ſoon exchanged for ornaments of glory; which now deck his immortal ſoul in the preſence

of God, with a luſtre infinitely ſuperior to what the diadem of Agrippa, or the robes of Feſtus could diſplay. The aſſembly breaking up ſomewhat abruptly, the principal perſons went aſide, and, after conferring together, unanimouſly ſaid, *This man doeth nothing worthy of death, or of bonds;* and therefore condemned the judgment of his perſecutors, who averred, *he was not worthy to live.* And Agrippa ſaid to Feſtus, *This man might have been ſet at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Cæſar.* True; but when he made the appeal, it was the moſt proper method he could take for his own ſecurity.

As ſoon as it was determined to ſail into Italy, the Apoſtle, and certain other priſoners, were delivered to one Julius, a centurion of a *cohort*, belonging to the *Auguſtan legion;* with whom Luke the ſacred Hiſtorian, and Ariſtarchus the Macedonian, of the city of Theſſalonica, continued. Embarking in a ſhip of Adramyttium, a city of Myſia, they weighed anchor, intending to ſail by the coaſts of the Leſſer Aſia, on the north of the Mediterranean; and the next day reached Sidon, a celebrated city on the Phœnician coaſt, about 40 miles north of Cæſarea. Through the courteſy of Julius, St. Paul was allowed to go on ſhore, and refreſh himſelf among his friends. From thence they ſailed under Cyprus, and, becauſe the wind was in the ſouth-weſt quarter, were hindered from taking the direct courſe, which lay to the ſouth, therefore ſteered to the north, between it and the coaſt of Cilicia. And ſailing acroſs that part of the Mediterranean, which waſhes the borders of the provinces of Cilicia and Pamphylia, they came to Myra, a city of Lycia, in which province is the foot of Taurus, the moſt celebrated mountain of all the Aſiatic continent.

There was an extenſive commerce, conſiſting chiefly of the produce of Egypt, Perſia and India, carried on between Alexandria and the coaſts of Italy; and Julius, meeting with a ſhip bound for the latter, took his priſoners out of that which had brought them to Myra, and put them therein. When they had ſailed many days, and made but little way,

either by reaſon of a calm, or becauſe the wind was contrary, and had ſcarcely got oppoſite Cnidus, a city and promontory of Doris, in the peninſula of Caria, they ſteered to the ſouth and ſailed under Crete, over againſt Salmone, another promontory on the eaſtern coaſt of that iſland; and paſſing it with difficulty, came to a place named *The Fair Havens*, ſo called to this day; not far from which was the city of Laſea, or, ſome ſay, *Alaſſa*.

Having made but little way, the ſeaſon being far advanced, and the art of Navigation very imperfectly known, ſailing of courſe would be very dangerous. The great annual feaſt of expiation, which God had commanded the Jews to obſerve on the tenth day of the ſeventh month, called *Tiſri*, which anſwered to part of our September and October, had been paſt ſome time, conſequently, the nights were increaſing in length, and would be dark; and at this ſtormy ſeaſon, the floods came down upon the Mediterranean Sea, which cauſed them to decline ſailing to diſtant parts until about Eaſter. St. Paul, foreſeeing the dangers to which they would be expoſed, if they left *The Fair Havens*, intreated thoſe who had the chief management of the voyage, not to put out to ſea. But Julius, believing the maſter and owner of the ſhip were better ſkilled in the art of navigation than he, regarded not his advice: and, as this harbour was incommodious to winter in, the greater part of the men on board wiſhed to try if by any means they could reach Phenice, which was ſituated on a gulf or bay on the ſouth ſide of Crete, between two promontories, one pointing to the ſouth-weſt, and the other to the north-weſt, which rendered it ſafe from the dangerous eaſt winds. Some think it had its name from the merchants of Tyre and Sidon, (cities of Phœnicia,) who frequently reſorted thither.

The ſouth wind blowing gently, and ſuppoſing themſelves ſure of making this bay, they weighed anchor, and ſailed cloſe to the ſhore of Crete, without any fear of being driven upon it. But ſhortly, there aroſe in the north-eaſt, a tempeſtuous wind, called,

by the ſacred Hiſtorian, *Euroclydon*, by Pliny, *the mariner's plague*, and in the modern languge, a *Levanter*, which drove them from the coaſt; this not being a *point-wind*, but rather a kind of *hurricane*, often ſhifting its quarter, toſſed them backward and forward in the Adriatic. And as it took the ſhip out of the command of the mariners, who were unable to make her bear againſt the wind, or, as it runs in the Greek, could not make her direct her eye againſt the wind, nor look it in the face, they therefore made no further attempts, but were driven before it. And running under a certain iſland called Clauda, a little to the ſouth-weſt of Crete, they, with the utmoſt difficulty preſerved the boat, by taking it into the ſhip, from the violence of the ſtorm, to be ready in caſe of any exigence. Having ſecured this, they undergirt the ſhip, or bound her with ropes to prevent her from bulging or ſplitting; and fearing, as the wind had varied more to the north, and driven them towards Africa, they ſhould fall upon the greater or the leſs *Syrtis*, thoſe quick-ſands upon the African coaſt ſo well known for the deſtruction of mariners and veſſels; ſtruck ſail, that their progreſs might be ſlower, and ſo were driven before the wind. As they were exceedingly toſſed, mounting up to the heavens as it were on the ſwelling ſurges, then falling down as to the bottom of the deep, (in which, to uſe the mariner's phraſe it would ſeem impoſſible that a ſhip could *live* at ſea,) to prevent the veſſel from foundering, the next day they threw the goods that were in her over board. And the third day, (either after looſing from *The Fair Havens*, or from their undergirthing the ſhip under Clauda,) the tempeſt was ſo great, that the paſſengers as well as mariners were employed, who heaved all her tackling overboard, that, drawing leſs water, they might not be expoſed to ſo much danger from the quickſands. Life is ſweet, and ſelf-preſervation a powerful principle: *Skin for ſkin*, ſaid Satan, *yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.*

Now the tempeſt continued without interruption a long time, during which they neither ſaw the ſun by

day, nor the ſtars by night, and (through the want of the *mariner's compaſs*,) and not knowing where they were, their diſtreſs increaſed until at length they deſpaired of life. St. Paul had predicted the tempeſt, and forewarned the crew and paſſengers of the approach thereof; and he gently reproved them for not complying with his advice to winter in *The Fair Havens*, and aſſerted that an angel of the God whom he ſerved, had appeared to him on the preceding night, aſſuring him, as an anſwer to his prayers for them, though the ſhip would be loſt, their lives would be preſerved, and he carried before Cæſar *; and exhorted them to be of good cheer. He freely acknowledged his relation to God, amongſt a company of Heathen ſoldiers and ſailors: his compoſure, reſignation, and compaſſion, might impreſs them with an idea of the ſuperiority of his religion and piety. Good men, living among thoſe that are wicked, are often made bleſſings to them, the latter being ſaved from temporal judgments, in anſwer to their prayers. If there had been but *ten* righteous perſons in populous Sodom, on the interceſſion of faithful Abraham, God would have ſpared it. *Except*, ſaith Iſaiah, *the Lord of Hoſts had left unto us a very ſmall remnant, we ſhould have been as Sodom.* What madneſs then it is in the wicked, to ſeek the deſtruction of the people of God!

On the fourteenth night, as they were toſſed up and down in the Adriatic Sea, (which name, in ancient geography, was given to all that part of the Mediterranean which lies ſouth of Italy,) the mariners ſuſpected, about midnight, that they drew near ſome land. And, letting down a plumb-line, they found the depth of the water twenty fathoms: going a little farther, ſounded again, and found it fifteen fathoms: then, apprehending they might run upon ſome rocky ſhore, they caſt four anchors out of the ſtern, having ground for them to faſten upon, and anxiouſly looked for the

* It is reported that Biſhop Ridley being once in danger by water, ſaid to the Boatman, *My lad, be of good cheer, and ply your oars, for this Boat carries a Biſhop, who muſt be burnt, not drowned!* alſo of Cæſar, that being in danger at ſea, ſaid to the Maſter, *Never fear, thou carrieſt Cæſar, and his fortune.*

approach of day, that they might ſee the land, and know their ſituation. While riding here, under a pretence of carrying out anchors from the foreſhip, to drop them at a diſtance from the veſſel, that ſhe might be more ſecure; (though at the ſame time with a deſign to make their eſcape to the ſhore, and leave the whole company on board to periſh,) they let down the boat into the water, and were on the point of entering it, when St. Paul, aware of their intention, ſaid to the Centurion and ſoldiers, *Except theſe* mariners *abide in the ſhip* to manage her, *ye cannot be ſaved;* hereupon the ſoldiers immediately cut the ropes by which it was ſuſpended, let it fall into the ſea, and thus defeated their purpoſe.

While the darkneſs prevented their diſcerning what they ought to do, and as they had been without any regular meal for fourteen days, conſequently were weak and faint, and as there was no probability of their reaching the ſhore without encountering great difficulties, the Apoſtle affectionately and earneſtly intreated them to take ſome food; which, that they might do with more cheerfulneſs, he renewed the aſſurance that *there would not a hair fall from any of them.* After taking bread, he gave thanks to God before them all, for their preſervation hitherto, and the aſſurance that none of them ſhould periſh in this voyage, as alſo for the proviſions which they ſhortly were about to partake; and eating ſome himſelf, they likewiſe took, and were much encouraged. They conſiſted of priſoners, ſoldiers, mariners, and probably ſome merchants, no leſs than 276 ſouls. And when they had finiſhed their meal, being ſatisfied with food, and believing they ſhould need no more ſuſtenance until they were delivered, they, a *third* time, lightened the ſhip, by caſting the remainder of the wheat into the ſea.

When it was day, they ſaw land, but knew it not; yet perceived a certain creek or little bay, having a level ſhore convenient for landing, into this they reſolved, if poſſible, to run the ſhip. Therefore, after taking up the anchors, or cutting the cables, (the original

will admit of either reading) they committed the ship to the mercy of the waves, at the same time loosing the rudder-bands, with which they made fast the helm, and hoisting up the main-sail to the wind, they made for the creek. But falling into a place where two seas met, probably by reason of a sand-bank running parallel with the shore, they ran the ship a-ground; and the forepart sticking fast, remained immoveable, but the hinder part being left loose, was soon broken in pieces with the violence of the waves.

At this awful crisis, there were several prisoners on board, who were to be escorted to Rome, and as the opportunity was favourable, were they so disposed, for escaping out of the hands of their guards, who, aware of the severity of the Roman law for breach of duty, formed the most unjust and cruel purpose of killing them, that they might run no hazard of being suspected of connivance or negligence. This was the greatest ingratitude to the Apostle, who had been so great a blessing to them, and, in answer to whose prayer, God had saved their lives. But the centurion, desirous to save so excellent a person, prevented the execution of this bloody project: and, to hinder any of the prisoners escaping, commanded the soldiers to get to land first, that they might receive and secure them; and those who could not swim, to get on boards, and broken pieces of the ship, and thus endeavour for their safety; and, the wind blowing fair, they all made the shore.

On their arrival, they were informed that the island was called *Melita*, from the abundance of *honey* found therein; for μελι, signifies *honey:* it is now denominated *Malta**, and is seven leagues in length,

* Malta is situated about the middle of the Mediterranean, between Barbary and Sicily, in latitude 35° 36 longitude 32° 36. The island consists of a chalky rock, and as no part of it remains uncultivated, no serpents are now found. In the same manner, of late, in some of the West India islands, serpents have been totally extirpated, by the extent of cultivation, having thereby lost all places of retreat. The saying of the inhabitants, that serpents which are brought hither cannot live, is a fable. The place where St. Paul and his company landed, is at this day shewn to travellers, and goes by the name of *St. Paul's shore*, or *haven*. The Melitese were originally a colony of the Carthaginians as appears from several old inscriptions in Punic characters, and from the language of the

three in breadth, twenty-one in circumference, and lies twenty ſouth of Sicily. The inhabitants, who ſpoke an African dialect, received the crew with great humanity, and kindled a fire, on account of the conſtant rain; but, when the Apoſtle was laying on it a bundle of ſticks which he had gathered, a very venomous viper, rouſed by the flames, came out, and twiſted itſelf round his arm. The iſlanders now thought themſelves witneſſes of Divine vengeance, demanding that juſtice which the waves had failed to execute. They ſuppoſed he was a notorious malefactor, particularly that he had been guilty of *murder*, becauſe they ſaw the viper *hanging on his hand*, which therefore they judged to have been the offending part; according to the rule which much prevailed among the ancients, that perſons were remarkably puniſhed in that part of the body, which had been the principal inſtrument of their ſin. The crime, of which they thought the Apoſtle guilty, is the moſt unnatural and inhuman; and God hath often brought it to light when concealed, that the perpetrators might ſuffer condign puniſhment.

We read that God ſet a mark of his indignation on Cain, the firſt murderer, alſo that the ſame crime was made capital to the ſons of Noah. Under the Jewiſh diſpenſation, it is worthy our notice, that among all the ſacrifices appointed for the atonement of ſin, there was none for this atrocious crime, nor *city of refuge* for thoſe guilty of it. From the erroneous concluſion of theſe Barbarians, we may obſerve, that, generally, by the evils which happen to a man in this life, no certain judgment can be made, either of his good or bad character; in the caſe before us it was falſe, as alſo in that of Job.

But the Apoſtle ſhook off the animal into the fire, without receiving harm. Nevertheleſs, the iſ-

preſent inhabitants, the number of whom is ſaid to be above 90,000. The emperor Charles the Vth gave it, in 1530, to the knights of *Rhodes*, driven out of *Rhodes* by the Turks. They are a thouſand in number, of whom five hundred always reſide on the iſland.——See a work (*highly recommended by the judicious Editors of the* ECLECTIC REVIEW. No. 6. art. 30.) written by Dr. Odmann, Upſal, deſigned for a companion to the younger Clergy; and which, I hope will ſoon be transferred into our language, by ſome perſon of ability and leiſure, for public utility.

landers, knowing that the bite of a viper occasioned a sudden and painful death, expected the venom* left in his flesh would have occasioned a burning and swelling, and he have instantly fallen down dead. But divine providence restrained its nature; and now was literally fulfilled that promise of Christ to his disciples, *They shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them.* HE who kept the lions from hurting Daniel, when thrown into their den; and the fire from so much as singeing one hair of the three young pious Jews thrown into Nebuchadnezzar's flaming furnace; also kept this viper from injuring St. Paul. All nature is under the control of God; and as natural agents cannot exert their essential properties, without his providential influence or concurrence, so at pleasure he can restrain these. This remark will illustrate that promise, *I will make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground*†. And also that, *Thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field: and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee*‡.

The islanders, seeing the Apostle unhurt, passed to another extreme, and took him to be a god, in the likeness of a man. This fancy was consistent with the Pagan theology, and the fabulous accounts which prevailed among the Heathen, that their gods sometimes made visits to this lower world. Grotius, Whitby, and some others, think that the Melitese took St. Paul for *Hercules*§, whom they worshipped, and was, according to Ptolemy, one of the gods of the Phœnicians, What a sudden transition! very much like what had happened at *Lystra*. There is scarcely any thing more mutable than men's opinions concerning each

* The *poison* of a *Viper*, so inflames the blood, that a person infected with it is tormented as with fire, and quickly dies. For this reason, the ancient Scythians, in war, used to dip their arrows in the blood and gall of vipers, that their enemies wounded by them, might die a painful and sudden death. And, in remote times, some condemned criminals were put to death, by vipers set to their breasts; by this means it was Cleopatra dispatched herself.

† Hos. ii. 28. ‡ Job v. 23.

§ Αλεξικακος, the driver away of evil.

other. Perſons of unimproved minds frequently run from one extreme to another, and conſequently not much dependence ought to be placed on the warmth of affection, where it is not grounded upon reaſon and conviction. In the caſe before us, it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that the providence of God ordered this viper to faſten on St. Paul's hand, that he might be diſtinguiſhed, and, by his receiving no injury, appear an extraordinary perſon; and this would alſo prepare the Malteſe to receive the Goſpel from him.

In the neighbourhood, where the ſhipwrecked company had met with ſuch kind treatment, was the eſtate of Publius, the Roman governor of the iſland, who, hearing of their diſtreſs, as alſo that an extraordinary perſon, who ſeemed to be immortal, was of their number, ſent for them to his houſe, and, with a generous and friendly diſpoſition entertained them in a very hoſpitable manner for three days*. In return, the Apoſtle miraculouſly healed the Governor's father, who was ill of a fever and bloody flux; which diſeaſes, when met together, are very dangerous, and often fatal. This, being ſpeedily noiſed abroad, throughout the iſland, excited others who had diſeaſes to apply, whom he alſo healed. And, no doubt, while thus relieving their bodies, he would attend to their ſpiritual health; and endeavour to remove from them ignorance, idolatry, and other ſins, by preaching the Goſpel, and directing them to apply to Chriſt for ſalvation: among other things, he would not forget to correct their miſtake in taking him for a god. His doctrine being attended with ſo many miraculous cures, we may conclude that it was embraced by many: and Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtorians tell us, that he and his companions founded a Chriſtian Church there. The governor's family, and the iſlanders paid them all poſſible reſpect; and, as a teſtimony

* The Malteſe were celebrated for their civility to ſtrangers; and the Greek word φιλοφρόνως, ſhows that the hoſpitality of Publius proceeded from a *friendly mind*. Luke the ſacred hiſtorian, calls him πρωτω, *chief*, and Grotius has produced an ancient inſcription, by which it appears that the title of πρῶτος, or *chief*, was given to the governor of this iſland: being thus elevated in the ſcale of ſociety, his kind diſpoſition, and beneficence, muſt have produced happy effects upon his inferiors.

of real eſteem, and gratitude for the good they had been inſtrumental of doing among them, when they were leaving the iſland, furniſhed them with plenty of proviſions, for comfortable accommodation, during the reſt of their voyage to the Italian ſhore.

We noticed, that the Faſt of Expiation was paſſed before they left Crete, from whence they were fourteen days on their paſſage to Malta, where they abode three months; at the end thereof, which was about Candlemas, they departed, in another ſhip of Alexandria, which had wintered in the iſland, and whoſe ſign was Gemini, or the twins, that is, *Caſtor* and *Pollux*, fictitious Pagan deities, whom the Poets feigned to be the ſons of Jupiter by Leda, who preſided over ſtorms and tempeſts at ſea, and had the care of mariners; therefore theſe were choſen by the owners for the patrons of this ſhip, and their images, which were thoſe of two young men on horſeback, with each a javelin in his hand, and by their ſides each half an egg and a ſtar, were placed at the head of the veſſel. Not long after they had ſailed, they made the iſland of Sicily, and landed at Syracuſe, ſituated on the eaſt ſhore, which was the metropolis; this was a trading voyage, therefore the Maſter's attention to his merchandiſe detained them here three days. Thence they coaſted round the eaſtern ſhore of the iſland and came over againſt Rhegium, a city, in the kingdom of Naples, and promontory in the ſouthernmoſt part of Italy, now called *Reggio*. After lying here one day, the ſouth-wind blew, and they came the next to Puteoli, another port in Italy, not far from Naples, now commonly called *Puzzoli*. When landed, they found ſome Chriſtian brethren, who earneſtly intreated them to ſtay ſeven days, to which the centurion conſenting, they left the ſhip, and proceeded by land to Rome.

From Puteoli, they began their journey on foot; and as probably the brethren there had ſent information of this to the Chriſtians at Rome, to whom about *three years* before the Apoſtle had written his excellent Epiſtle, ſeveral of them came from thence to meet

them; ſome as far as Apii-forum, a town in the *Appian-way*, at the diſtance of fifty-one miles from Rome, others only to Tres Tabernæ or the Three Taverns*, not more than thirty; to offer their ſincere reſpects, and accompany them to the metropolis. At this interview, ſo long wiſhed for by the Apoſtle, *he thanked God;* and becauſe they had liberty, thus publicly to come forth, alſo piety, to own him in his bonds, *took courage*, and performed the remainder of his journey with renewed vigour.

On their arrival at the city, the centurion delivered the delinquents to the noted Burrhus Afranius, *præfect* or *captain* of the *prætorian* band, who had the charge of the ſtate priſoners; but the Apoſtle was permitted to dwell by himſelf, in a houſe he hired for that purpoſe, alſo to walk abroad when he pleaſed, with a ſoldier to attend him, to whom he was chained, as the Roman cuſtom was. The teſtimony that Julius gave to the Captain of the guard concerning him, might be the means of this favour. God is the powerful patron of oppreſſed innocence, and when a man's ways pleaſe him, he can make his enemies pity, and be at peace with him.------Who, on meeting the Apoſtle in theſe bonds, would have gueſſed at his real character, and imagined that he was one of the moſt upright, benevolent, and generous of mankind! It has been obſerved, that this entry of St. Paul, in chains, into the firſt city of the World, in order to make it one of the chief of the Church, was more glorious and triumphant to the eye of faith, than all the public entries of the Roman emperors.

As his great love to the Jews engaged him, wherever he came and found any, to labour in the firſt place to promote their ſalvation, he, after three days of reſt, and probably much prayer, called the chief of them together; to whom he related the cauſe of his bonds,

* The rendering *Tres Tabernæ, three taverns* conveys the idea of *inns*, or houſes appointed for refreſhment and accommodation; but the proper meaning of the word *Tabernæ* is *frontier towns*, built to repreſs the inroads and inſults of foreigners. That this was a city, properly ſo called, and an epiſcopal ſee in the time of Conſtantine, is evident from Optatus, who mentions *Felix a Tribus Tabernis*, of the Three Tabernæ as one of the nineteen biſhops.

also that he was come to Rome, not with a design to accuse others, but to defend himself. To his very great surprise, no doubt, they informed him, that they had neither received letters from Judea concerning him, nor had any of the Jews, from other parts, related professedly, in a set discourse, nor occasionally in conversation, any evil of him. The Jews at Jerusalem, either despaired of their cause, when it should be impartially heard, as they supposed it would be before Nero; or because the Apostle was at such a distance from them, they settled among themselves, and were contented with his absence. But though the Jews at Rome had not heard any thing prejudicial to his character, they had against the Christian religion, of which he was a preacher; and, after soliciting his opinion, said, *for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against.*

On their appointing a certain day, he attended in the morning, and, continued his discourse until evening; insisting that the kingdom of God, which they had long expected, was of a spiritual, and not of a temporal nature; and that Jesus of Nazareth, in whose name he preached, was the person foretold, as the promised Messiah, and Lord of that Kingdom. His sermon produced different effects: some believed, while others would not. Hereupon disagreeing among themselves, they brake up the assembly; but before they departed, he recited a passage of the prophet Isaiah, concerning their fathers, very applicable to them, which denounced a judgment of judicial blindness, as the punishment of wilful unbelief and obstinate hardness of heart; and concluded with a prediction of the removal of the Gospel from them, and that the Gentiles, favoured therewith, would hear and receive it, and enjoy the blessings which they rejected.

After this, and previous to his trial before Cæsar, or his deputy, St. Paul continued two whole years, in his own hired house, unmolested by the Jews; during which time, he preached the Gospel to all who chose to hear him; neither emperor, senate, magistrate, soldier, priest, nor people, forbidding him. In conse-

quence of which, many converts were doubtleſs made; and this confinement, which ſeemed to have ſo diſcouraging an aſpect, was rather a means of promoting the Goſpel. Rome, at that time, was in a moſt flouriſhing condition, viſited by Gentiles from all countries; who, ſeeing or hearing the boldneſs and conſtancy of the Apoſtle, in preaching and defending the Goſpel, as it were before the face of the tyrant, would carry home the tidings, which would be to the furtherance of Chriſtianity. His bonds in Chriſt, and ſufferings for the truth, were noticed in the court, as well as by all who lived in and about the city; he was even ſucceſsful in converting ſome of Nero's family, and probably alſo part of the prætorian ſoldiers. Many of his retired hours were employed in writing Epiſtles to ſeveral Churches, to the Galatians, (if the ſubſcription at the end be not ſpurious,) Epheſians, Philippians, Coloſſians, and to Philemon; in which he mentions ſeveral things concerning his impriſonment.

Timothy, coming to viſit the Apoſtle in his bonds, was, on ſome account, made a priſoner alſo, but afterwards obtained his liberty. When St. Paul was called to make his apology or defence, againſt the accuſations of the Jews, none of the Chriſtians in Rome, through a fear of ſuffering, durſt appear to give their teſtimony in his favour; except Luke, who ſtood with him to the laſt. The Emperor himſelf was much enraged againſt him, for which Chryſoſtom gives this reaſon, becauſe he had confounded Simon Magus, the ſorcerer, whom he highly eſteemed.

At laſt, however, he was *delivered out of the mouth of the lion*, which animal, in power, policy, cruelty, and terror, Nero reſembled: he went to Rome about February, in the ſeventh year of his reign, and in the ninth was ſet at liberty. The Romans had not yet made any laws againſt the Diſciples of Chriſt; hence it is moſt likely that the Chriſtians, in the Imperial family, uſed their intereſt with the Emperor to liberate the Apoſtle. His long confinement completed twenty-five years from our Saviour's aſcenſion. By this is ſeen the amazing progreſs which the Goſpel had then

made, in the parts of the world which lay west of Jerusalem; but how far eastward the other Apostles had carried it, in the same time, History does not inform us*. Neither have we any certain information by whom Christianity was first preached at Rome: probably, as some inhabitants of that celebrated city were present at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, they, being converted, might, on their return, propagate it by the exercise of extraordinary gifts, and confirm it by the performance of miraculous works.

Whither St. Paul travelled, between this first, and his second imprisonment at Rome, is very uncertain; we having no authentic documents to give us information. Theoderet says, that he went to the *Islands of the Sea;* also numbers some *Gauls*, i. e. French, and *Britains*, among the Disciples of the tent-maker. Clemens Romanus expressly affirms, that he preached in the west, even to its utmost bounds; which must at least include Spain, whither he had intended going. Tradition says, he went thence to Crete, afterwards with Timothy into Judea. In his Epistle to the Hebrews, which it is supposed he wrote shortly after his enlargement, he says, *Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you.* From thence it is supposed he went to visit the Churches in Asia. But in what order he visited these, or how long he remained at any of them, cannot be determined. We are told, however, that about the year of Christ 65, or 67, as Nero had begun to persecute the Christians, on a pretence of their being concerned in burning the city, (of which they were innocent and himself guilty,) he returned to Rome, that he might comfort and encourage them; where, some say, he met with St. Peter, who, with other Christians, was thrown into prison. The fire was so extensive that it burnt ten of the fourteen parts of which it consisted, and the Emperor beheld the

* As St. Luke concludes his History with St. Paul's abode at Rome, before his journey into Spain, &c. and several years previous to his death, we may conclude, it was published with his approbation, as the ancients also say his Gospel was.

flames with pleaſure from the top of a high tower, and played on his lyre, while he ſung the deſtruction of Troy; a dreadful ſcene! which his barbarity had realized before his eyes.

St. Paul fell again into the hands of Nero, who confined him. During his impriſonment, he wrote his ſecond Epiſtle to Timothy, whom he urged to come to him quickly, as the time of his departure was at hand. He mentions that Demas, who had been his fellow-labourer, had forſaken him; having loved this preſent evil world, and was gone to Theſſalonica; where, ſays Dorotheus, he became an idolatrous prieſt, and, adds Epiphanius, denied the deity of Jeſus Chriſt, whom before he had profeſſed and preached as the true God and Saviour of the world. Creſcens was gone to Galatia, to preach the Goſpel. Titus to Dalmatia, a region of Illyricum, whither the Apoſtle had carried the Chriſtian religion; a country now ſubject to the Venetians. Only Luke, his faithful and conſtant companion, was with him; Jerome ſays he was 84 years old when he died, and was buried at Conſtantinople. Tychicus, the Apoſtle had ſent to Epheſus, to take care of the Churches there. He mentions Oneſiphorus with great reſpect, for his attention to him when at Rome; alſo Pudens, a noble ſenator, a convert of his to the Chriſtian faith; Linus, afterwards biſhop of Rome; and Claudia, a Britiſh lady of noble birth, who going to Rome, was converted by him, and afterwards married to Pudens.

Chryſoſtom relates, that the cauſe of St. Paul's impriſonment, was his converting one of Nero's concubines; who, on her becoming moral and holy, was ſo incenſed, that at laſt he ordered his head to be taken off. It ſeems to have been univerſally agreed among all ancient writers, who mention his death, that he was beheaded at *Aquæ Salviæ*, three miles from Rome; for being free of that city, he could not be crucified, as Peter was; whoſe death, as ſays the Latin church, took place on the very ſame day. It is ſaid, and there is every reaſon to believe it, that this diſtinguiſhed Apoſtle yielded to martyrdom with the greateſt cheer-

fulnefs; and that he was interred in the *Via Oftenfis.* two miles from Rome, where Conftantine the Great, erected a church to his memory, A. D. 318; which was fucceffively repaired and beautified by Theodofius the Great, and the empref Placidia. This was in the laft year of Nero's reign; who, for his almoft unparalleled crimes, was condemned by the Senate, to be dragged naked through the ftreets, whipped to death, and afterwards thrown down from the Tarpeian rock, like the meaneft malefactor: but this, however, he prevented by killing himfelf, A. D. 68, in the 32d year of his age, after wearing the purple thirteen years and eight months. On this, Rome was filled with acclamations of joy, and the citizens, to indicate it, wore fuch caps as were generally ufed by flaves who had received their freedom.

Thus we fee, as Dr. Paley obferves, that the inftitution of the Chriftian religion, which properly *began* only after its author's removal from the world, before the end of thirty years had fpread itfelf through Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, almoft all the numerous diftricts of the Leffer Afia, through Greece, and the iflands of the Ægean Sea, the fea-coaft of Africa, and had extended itfelf to Rome, and into Italy. At Antioch in Syria, at Joppa, Ephefus, Corinth, Theffalonica, Berea, Iconium, Derbe, Antioch in Pifidia, at Lydda, Saron, the number of converts is intimated by the expreffions, *a great number—great multitudes—much people.* Converts are mentioned, without any defignation of their number, at Tyre, Cefarea, Troas, Athens, Philippi, Lyftra, Damafcus.

The Acts of the Apoftles, though containing the beft Ecclefiaftical Hiftory of the firft and pureft times of the Chriftian Church, yet does not contain a full and complete account of the progrefs of Chriftianity during the time it embraces; and the fuccefs of the Gofpel which it mentions is rather *incidental,* than with defign; and, as Dr. Paley juftly obferves, if what we read in the Hiftory be true, much more than what the Hiftory contains muft be true alfo. The incidental circumftances of the progrefs of Chriftianity men-

tioned, muſt have connected with them a vaſt variety of circumſtances relating to the ſame ſucceſs, which, were we in poſſeſſion of them all, would not only pleaſe, but aſtoniſh us. Had the ſacred Hiſtorian written a detailed account of the rapid and extenſive prevalence of Chriſtianity, he muſt have brought forward a great abundance of additional matter, which would have increaſed the book to a far greater ſize. For, as ſays the above celebrated Author, although the narrative from which our information is derived, has been entitled the *Acts of the Apoſtles*, it is in fact a hiſtory of the twelve Apoſtles, only during a ſhort time of their continuing together at Jeruſalem; and even of this period the account is very conciſe. The work afterwards conſiſts of a few important paſſages of St. Peter's miniſtry, of the ſpeech and death of Stephen, of the preaching of Philip the deacon; and the ſequel of the volume, that is, two thirds of the whole, is taken up with the converſion, the travels, the diſcourſes, and hiſtory of the new apoſtle, Paul; in which hiſtory alſo large portions of time are often paſſed over with very ſcanty notice.

Parallel teſtimonies with the Hiſtory, are the letters which have come down to us of St. Paul, and of the other Apoſtles. In the epiſtle to the Romans, the author is led to deliver a remarkable declaration, concerning the extent of his preaching, its efficacy, and the cauſe to which he aſcribes it. *I will not dare to ſpeak of any of thoſe things which Chriſt hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed. Through mighty ſigns and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; ſo that from Jeruſalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the Goſpel of Chriſt.* He means that country now called Sclavonia, which has the Adriatic Sea on the ſouth, and Hungary on the north. This, according to Pareus's computation, was little leſs than a thouſand miles. It is diſtant from Jeruſalem, in a direct line, according to another computation, about fourteen hundred miles; and Archbiſhop Tillotſon ſays, this journey, according to the account St. Paul gives of it,

is computed to be no leſs than 2000 miles. But the Apoſtle did not go ſtraight from Jeruſalem to Illyricum, for then he muſt have gone chiefly by ſea, but took a large circuit, preaching in a variety of countries, as providence opened the way.

In the Epiſtle to the Coloſſians, we find an oblique, but very ſtrong intimation, of the general ſtate of the Chriſtian miſſion, at leaſt as it appeared to St. Paul: *If ye continue in the faith grounded and ſettled, and be not moved away from the hope of the Goſpel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven;* this Goſpel, he had reminded them of, near the beginning of his letter, *was preſent with them as it was in all the world.* By *every creature which is under heaven,* is here intended, every human creature wherever the Apoſtles went; the Goſpel being preached, not in Judea only, but amongſt the Gentiles alſo, and offered to every perſon, and nation, and tongue. By *all the world* is meant, the moſt famous parts, regions, and provinces of the world, under the power of the Romans. In this ſenſe, it is ſeveral times uſed, particularly in Luke, where it is ſaid, *there went out a decree from Cæſar Auguſtus, that all the world ſhould be taxed,* i. e. all that part of the world under his government. As the progreſs of the Goſpel, at its firſt promulgation, was wonderful, ſo likewiſe was its efficacy great, *it brought forth fruit wherever it came,* i. e. it made many converts to Chriſtianity, changed men's principles and tempers, and formed their converſation and actions according to its nature and rules.

The Firſt Epiſtle of Peter accoſts the Chriſtians diſperſed throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Aſia, and Bithynia. By theſe the Apoſtle means the Chriſtianized Jews of the diſperſion; he calls them *ſtrangers,* becauſe they lived out of Canaan, their native country, and were diſperſed or ſcattered through the provinces there mentioned, which were all in the leſſer Aſia. Philo and Joſephus, both Jewiſh writers, ſay, that there was no nation in their time, wherein were not ſome Jews inhabiting, who had been pre-

viouſly diſperſed by their ſeveral captivities. Soon after Chriſt's aſcenſion, the unbelieving Jews made Judea too hot, for thoſe of their brethren who embraced Chriſtianity.

It comes next to be conſidered, how far theſe accounts are confirmed, or followed up, by other evidence. In the tenth year of Nero, which coincides with the thirtieth after Chriſt's aſcenſion, there happened a great fire at Rome, which we have already noticed. Tacitus, in delivering a relation thereof, brings in the Chriſtians, of whom he ſays,---They had their denomination from Chriſtus, who, in the reign of Tiberius, was put to death as a criminal by the procurator Pontius Pilate. This pernicious ſuperſtition, though checked for a while, broke out again, and ſpread not only over Judea, but reached the city alſo. At firſt they were but apprehended, who confeſſed themſelves of that ſect; afterwards *a vaſt multitude* was diſcovered by them.---This teſtimony to the early propagation of Chriſtianity is extremely material, ſays Dr. Paley. It is from an hiſtorian of great reputation, who lived near the time; from a ſtranger and an enemy to the religion: and it joins immediately with the period through which the ſcripture accounts extend. It eſtabliſhes theſe points, that the religion began at Jeruſalem, that it ſpread throughout Judea, that it had reached Rome, and not only ſo, but that it had there obtained a great number of converts. This was about ſix years after the time that St. Paul wrote his Epiſtle to the Romans, and ſomething more than two after he arrived there himſelf. Theſe converts to the religion were then ſo numerous at Rome, that of thoſe who were betrayed by the information of the perſons firſt perſecuted, a great multitude, (multitudo ingens,) was diſcovered and ſeized. The Doctor proceeds,—It ſeems probable, that the temporary check which Tacitus repreſents Chriſtians to have received, (repreſſa in præſens,) referred to the perſecution at Jeruſalem, which followed the death of Stephen, and which, by diſperſing the converts, cauſed the inſtitution, in ſome meaſure to diſappear. Its ſecond eruption at the ſame

place, and within a ſhort time, has much in it of the character of truth. It was the firmneſs and perſeverance of men who knew upon what they relied.

Pliny the younger, who lived in the cloſeſt friendſhip with Tacitus, (and whoſe eſteem for each other was ſo mutual, that they corrected each other's works,) in his Letter which was written to the emperor Trajan, not quite eighty years after Chriſt's aſcenſion, ſoliciting his counſel and authority how he ſhould act towards the Chriſtians, has the following remarkable words, which, perhaps, are ſuperior in importance to thoſe of Tacitus :---Suſpending all judicial proceedings, I have recourſe to you for advice; for it has appeared to me a matter highly deſerving conſideration, eſpecially upon account of the great number of perſons who are in danger of ſuffering: for many of all ages, and of every rank, of both ſexes likewiſe, are accuſed, and will be accuſed. Nor has the contagion of this ſuperſtition ſeized cities only, but the leſſer towns alſo, and the open country. Nevertheleſs it ſeemed to me that it may be reſtrained and corrected. It is certain that the temples, which were almoſt forſaken, begin to be more frequented; and the ſolemnities, after a long interruption, are revived. Victims, likewiſe, are every where (paſſim) bought up; whereas, for ſome time, there were few to purchaſe them. Whence it is eaſy to imagine, that numbers of men might be reclaimed, if pardon were granted to thoſe that ſhall repent*.---Here then is a very ſignal evidence of the progreſs of the Chriſtian religion in a ſhort ſpace, ſays Dr. Paley, in his remarks on this letter. It was not fourſcore years after the crucifixion of Jeſus, when Pliny wrote this letter; nor ſeventy years ſince the Apoſtles of Jeſus began to mention his name to the Gentile world. Bithynia and Pontus were at a great diſtance from Judea, the centre from which the religion ſpread; yet in theſe provinces Chriſtianity had long ſubſiſted, and Chriſtians were now in ſuch numbers as to lead the Roman governor to report to the emperor, that they

* C. Plin. Trajano, Imp. lib. 10. ep. 97.

were found, not only in cities, but in villages and in open countries; of all ages, of every rank and condition; that they abounded ſo much as to have produced a viſible deſertion of the temples, that the beaſts brought to market for victims had few purchaſers, that the ſolemnities were much neglected; circumſtances noted by Pliny, for the expreſs purpoſe of ſhowing to the emperor the effect and prevalency of the new inſtitution.

Juſtin, ſurnamed the martyr, who was born A. D. 103, converted to Chriſtianity about the year 132, and beheaded at Rome, A. D. 167, in his dialogue, with Trypho, a noted Jew, (which he wrote about thirty years after Pliny, and one hundred and ſix after the aſcenſion,) has theſe remarkable words: There is no nation, whether of Barbarians, or Greeks, or any others, what names ſoever they are called by, whether they live in waggons, or without houſes, or in tents, among whom prayers are not made, and thankſgiving offered up, to the Father and Creator of all, through the name of the crucified Jeſus*.

Irenæus, in his Treatiſe againſt Hereſies, which, according to Dodwell, he publiſhed A. D. 176, has accidentally deſcribed the ſtate of the Church in his time, by obſerving that,—The Chriſtian religion was diffuſed through the whole earth to the very ends of it. This is the more to be remarked, ſays Macknight, conſidering that the perſecutions had been ſo ſharp, numerous, laſting, and cloſe on the back of one another.

Tertullian, (who was born at Carthage, about the year of our Lord, 156, became a convert to Chriſtianity, was baptized, in 196, and after various revolutions in his religious ſentiments, died at the place of his nativity, A. D. 246; about the 90th year of his age, fifty years after Juſtin, in A. D. 200,) in his Apology, gives an account of the prevalence of the Chriſtian faith in his time. Addreſſing himſelf to the Roman governors, probably the proconſul of Africa,

* Dial. cum Tryph. p. 343.

and the chief magistrate residing in Carthage, he says,—We were but of yesterday, and we have filled your cities, islands, towns and boroughs, the camp, the senate, and the forum. They (the heathen adversaries of Christianity) lament, that every sex, age, condition, and persons of every rank also, are converts to that name. He proceeds,---They are fit and ready for war, though they yield themselves to be killed for their religion. Had they a mind to revenge themselves, their numbers were sufficiently great to appear in open arms, having a party not in this or that province, but in all quarters of the world. Nay, should they all be agreed among themselves to retire out of the Roman empire, the loss would be very seriously felt. The world would be amazed at the solitude which would ensue; and you would have more enemies than friends; whereas, now your enemies are fewer, because of the multitude of Christians, almost all your subjects and best citizens consisting of them. It would be more than a sufficient revenge to us, that your city, were we gone, would be an empty possession to unclean spirits: and therefore Christianity is not to be called a trouble to your cities, but a favour; nor are we to be accounted enemies to mankind, but only adversaries to human errors*.

Tertullian, writing to Scapula, deputy of Africa, then persecuting the Christians, desires him to consider, If he went on with his persecution, what he would do with these many thousands both of men and women, of every rank and age, that would readily offer themselves? what fires or swords must he have to dispatch them? Carthage itself must be decimated, his own friends and acquaintances, the principal men and matrons in the city, will suffer; if you spare not us, spare yourself, spare Carthage; have pity on the province†. Again, when writing against the Jews, by way of setting forth the extensive diffusion of Christianity, he has these words,—The sound (speaking of the apostles) went through all the earth; in whom but in Christ‡, who is

* Tertull. Apol. c. 37. † To Scapula, c. 15.
‡ Euseb. Eccl. Hist. lib. 6. c. 43.

now come, have all theſe nations believed? even Parthians, Medes, Elamites, the inhabitants of Meſopotamia, Armenia, Phrygia, Cappadocia, Pontus, Aſia and Pamphylia, theſe who dwelt in Egypt, and the region of Africa, which is beyond Cyrene, ſtrangers and denizens of Rome, Jews at Jeruſalem, and the reſt of the nations; as alſo many of the Getuli, many borders of the Moors, the utmoſt bounds of Spain, divers nations in Gaul, and places of Britain, inacceſſible to the Roman armies, have yielded ſubjection to Chriſt; and alſo the Sarmatians, the Dacians, the Germans, and the Scythians, with many obſcure countries and provinces, iſlands, and places unknown to us, which, ſays he, I cannot reckon up; in all which the name of Chriſt reigns, becauſe he is now come, before whom the gates of all cities are ſet open, and bars of iron are ſnapt aſunder; that is, theſe hearts once poſſeſſed by the devil, are opened by faith in him*. And afterwards he demonſtrates, that the kingdom of Chriſt, is more extenſive than any of the four grand monarchies.

Origen is generally conſidered as the moſt learned of all the Chriſtian fathers; he was born at Alexandria in Egypt, of Chriſtian parents, A. D. 185, and, after much perſecution, and great exertions in promoting the cauſe of learning and truth, died at Tyre, A. D. 253, in the ſixty-ninth year of his age. As a writer, he follows Tertullian at the diſtance of only thirty years, and, in deſcribing the progreſs of Chriſtianity, ſays,—In every part of the world, throughout Greece, and in all other nations, there are innumerable and immenſe multitudes, who, having left the laws of their country, and thoſe whom they eſteemed gods, have given themſelves up to the law of Moſes, and the religion of Chriſt; and this, not without the bitterest reſentment from the idolaters, by whom they were frequently put to torture, and ſometimes to death: and it is wonderful to obſerve, how, in ſo ſhort a time, the religion has increaſed, amidſt puniſhment and death, and every kind of torture†.---And again;---By the good providence of God, the Chriſtian religion has ſo flouriſhed

* Againſt the Jews, c. 7.

† Or. in Cels. lib. 1

and increaſed continually, that it is now preached freely without moleſtation, although there were a thouſand obſtacles to the ſpreading of the doctrine of Jeſus in the world. But as it was the will of God that the Gentiles ſhould have the benefit of it, all the councils of men againſt the Chriſtians were defeated; and by how much the more emperors and governors of provinces, and the people every where, ſtrove to depreſs them, ſo much the more have they increaſed and prevailed exceedingly*.

With regard to the city of Rome only, we have ſome very important information. Porphyry, the Tyrian philoſopher, in the account which he wrote of his maſter Plotinus, who was born in the 13th year of the emperor Severus, A. D. 206, informs us, that while Plotinus lived in Rome, whither he came in the fortieth year of his age, A. D. 246, there were many Chriſtians in the city†. Cornelius, who was biſhop of Rome in the time of the Decian perſecution, A. D. 251, writing to Cyprian biſhop of Carthage, gives the following account of the Chriſtian church there. We have in this place forty-ſix preſbyters, ſeven deacons, and as many ſub-deacons; and widows, and other perſons maintained by the church, fifteen hundred‡. Valeſius, in a note on this quotation from Cornelius, ſays,—Hence we gather how many churches there were then at Rome, for every preſbyter had his particular church; ſo that, if there were forty-ſix preſbyters, there were alſo forty-ſix churches: he refers his readers to Baronius in the year of Chriſt, 47.—Macknight, from the number of perſons who were maintained by the Church, concludes the number of Chriſtians to have been great. His words are,---Now ſuppoſing every twentieth perſon to have received maintenance, there will have been no leſs than thirty thouſand Chriſtians in Rome at this time. A vaſt number, conſidering that, the emperors having their uſual reſidence in this city, their edicts for perſecution muſt have been exe-

* Or. con Cels. lib. 7.

† De vitâ Plotin. c. 16.

‡ Euſeb. Eccl. Hiſt. lib. 6. p. 123.

cuted with the utmoſt rigour, under their eye, and by their direction*.

Lampridius, a Heathen writer, who flouriſhed in the reign of Dioclesian, A. D. 290, tells us, that the Emperor Alexander Severus, who obtained the purple, A. D. 222, had the image of Chriſt in his private chapel, would have built him a temple, and admitted him among the gods, as he ſays Adrian, who became emperor, A. D. 117, intended to have done, had not the prieſts aſſured him, from their divination, that it would make all the world Chriſtians, and cauſe the other temples to be deſerted. His words are,—If he had leiſure in the morning, he worſhipped in his private chapel, wherein he had the deified emperors, making choice however of the beſt. There alſo he had the more holy ſouls, among whom Apollonius, and, as a writer of that age ſays, Chriſt, Abraham, and Orpheus, and ſuch like gods; alſo the image of his anceſtors.—He intended to build Chriſt a temple, and to receive him among the gods; which Adrian likewiſe is ſaid to have deſigned, who in every city cauſed temples to be raiſed without images, which, becauſe they had no gods, are at this day called Adriani. Theſe temples he is ſaid to have prepared for the end now mentioned; but he was hindered by thoſe who, having conſulted the auſpices, found that if what he propoſed were accompliſhed, all men would become Chriſtians, and the other temples would be deſerted†.

Arnobius, (who was profeſſor of rhetoric at Sicca, in Numidia, and at firſt a great enemy to Chriſtianity, but afterwards embraced the faith which before he wiſhed to deſtroy, and wrote a learned and eloquent work, containing ſeven books, againſt the Gentiles at the end of the third century, immediately before Conſtantine's acceſſion,) in his firſt book againſt the Gentiles, ſpeaks thus: Is not this an argument for our faith, that in ſo little a ſpace of time, the ſacraments of Chriſt's great name are diffuſed over the world? that orators, grammarians, rhetoricians, lawyers, phyſicians, and phi-

* Biſhop of Landaff's Theological Tracts, Vol. 5. p. 804.
† Lamprid apud Hiſt. Auguſt. Script. p. 439. D. p. 351. E.

loſophers, men of great genius, love our religion, deſpiſing thoſe things wherein before they truſted? that ſervants will ſuffer torments from their maſters, wives part with their huſbands, and children be diſinherited by their parents, rather than abandon the Chriſtian faith*.

It is well known, that in the reign of Conſtantine, who came to the throne about three hundred and twenty years after Chriſt, Chriſtianity became the religion of the Roman empire; and ſome Hiſtorians think it is probable that he declared himſelf on the ſide of the Chriſtians, becauſe they were the powerful party. However that might be, according to the declaration of Euſebius, his converſion to Chriſtianity was very remarkable; which, though ſome writers of Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory have treated as fable, I ſhall nevertheleſs relate. His father Conſtantius, had been very indulgent to the Chriſtian religion, which might have a good effect on his ſon Conſtantine. But that which determined Conſtantine to embrace this religion was as follows: The people of Rome being weary of the government of thoſe tyrants to whom they had lately been ſubject, ſent to Conſtantine, who was then in the city of York, in England, to come and take the throne. Having left this iſland, and marching from France into Italy, againſt Maxentius, on this expedition, which was likely to exalt or ruin him, he was oppreſſed with anxiety. Some god he thought needful to protect him: and was principally concerned to what divine power he ſhould recommend himſelf and his cauſe. The God of the Chriſtians he was moſt inclined to reſpect; but wanted ſome ſatisfactory proof of his real exiſtence and power; and neither underſtood the means of acquiring this, nor could be content with the atheiſtic indifference, in which ſo many generals and heroes, ſince his time, have acquieſced. He had recourſe to prayer; and, in that duty, implored, with much vehemence and importunity, direction; and God left him not unanſwered. While he was marching with his forces, in the afternoon, the trophy of the croſs ap-

* Againſt the Gentiles, L. 1. p. 53.

peared very luminous in the heavens, higher than the ſun, with this inſcription, *Conquer by this.* That this was no deluſion or fancy, he was convinced from thoſe that attended him, who beheld the glorious object as well as himſelf; and he and his ſoldiers were aſtoniſhed at the ſight. He continued pondering on the event: and on that, or the night following, Chriſt appeared to him when aſleep, with the ſame ſign of the croſs, and directed him to make uſe of the ſymbol as his military enſign. Conſtantine accordingly obeyed, and the croſs was henceforward diſplayed in his armies; and, now was attended with victory over Maxentius, who periſhed before the very gates of Rome, in the river near Milvian bridge; this was in the ſeventh year of his reign. And he was no ſooner maſter of Rome, by this event, than he honoured the croſs, by putting a ſpear of that form into the hand of the ſtatue erected for him there.

At the time when Conſtantine ſaw the croſs, he was totally unacquainted with the nature and deſign of Chriſtianity; but aſked the Chriſtian paſtors who this God was, and what was the meaning of the ſign? who rightly informed him of the proofs and principles of this religion, and of the ſignification of the croſs which he had beheld. From this time Conſtantine believed the truth of Chriſtianity; and perſevered in the profeſſion of it to his death. In conſequence of this change having taken place in the Emperor, it is eaſy to predict what would immediately follow in the Roman empire, now no longer pagan but Chriſtian.

Thus have we ſeen that the power of the Chriſtian religion was ſo great, that it confounded the cavils of the Jews, conquered the bigotry of the prieſts, ſilenced the oracles of the devil, baffled the philoſophy of the Heathen, ſubdued a great part of the world, and enlarged its conqueſts beyond thoſe of the Roman empire. From the age of Conſtantine, divine Providence ſo ordered it, ſays Dr. Jortin, that Chriſtianity was the reigning religion in the Roman empire, under Chriſtian Emperors, a ſmall interval excepted in the reign of Julian; and this ſeems to have been neceſſary

for its ſupport. In proceſs of time it was ſo much altered and defaced, that, without the protection of the Civil Magiſtrate, it might have been in danger, and Paganiſm, new-modelled and refined by philoſophers, have gained too many advantages over it. Thus things went on from bad to worſe, till the Reformation reſcued the Goſpel, in ſome degree, from the hands into which it had fallen. Such was the ſtate of religion for many ages; but Chriſtianity, at the very worſt, and under the greateſt diſadvantages, could not loſe her excellence; and undoubtedly produced good effects on thouſands and ten thouſands, whoſe lives are not recorded in Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory; which, like other Hiſtory, is for the moſt part a regiſter of the vices, the follies, and the quarrels of thoſe who made a figure and a noiſe in this world.

Of the Cauſes which operated to produce the ſpeedy and general Spread of the Chriſtian Religion.

The things unknown to feeble ſenſe,
Unſeen by Reaſon's glimmering ray,
With ſtrong, commanding Evidence,
Their Heavenly origin diſplay. WESLEY.

Whence but from Heaven could men unſkill'd in arts,
In different nations born, in different parts,
Weave ſuch agreeing truths? Or how, or why
Should all conſpire to cheat us with a lie?
Unaſk'd their pains, ungrateful their advice,
Starving their gains, and martyrdom their price? DRYDEN.

HAVING traced the aſtoniſhing progreſs, and wide extenſion of the religion of Chriſt, on its firſt promulgation, we ſhall proceed to point out ſome of the cauſes which operated to produce theſe effects. Inveſtigating cauſes, and marking their operations, are attended both with pleaſure and profit. In the phyſical world, theſe afford ample ſcope to intellect and literature, and are great luxuries to the mind; but much more in the moral and religious, in which every thing is of far ſuperior importance. In religion, as well as in philoſophy, it holds good, that the force of any moving body may be known, from the oppoſition it overcomes. We have already ſeen with what hinderance Chriſtianity met, from ignorance, prejudice, intereſt, learning, authority, power, malice, and ſtrong combinations among men; and, notwithſtanding theſe, how it prevailed, and finally became general and eſtabliſhed.

1. A concatenation of providential circumſtances, prepared the way for the propagation thereof.

The Jews, being in ſubjection to the Romans, were thereby prevented making that effectual oppoſition, which they otherwiſe would have done. They erroneouſly expected, that the Meſſiah would come in the pompous character of a temporal prince and diſtinguiſhed conqueror; raiſe them to a ſtate of indepen-

dence and univerſal dominion; alſo that under him they would amaſs immenſe wealth, and indulge in unbounded pleaſure. At his coming, they had an unconquerable love of liberty, but were unable to obtain it. Their factions proved ineffectual ſtruggles, and ſerved only to make their chains the ſtronger. The miracles that Chriſt wrought, to convince them of his divine miſſion, exciting curioſity and ſurpriſe, drew multitudes after him, and produced only a political alarm in the breaſts of the chief prieſts and Phariſees, who, thereupon, called a council, in which they ſaid, *What do we? for this man doth many miracles, and if we let him alone, all men will believe on him, and the Romans ſhall come, and take away both our place and nation.* They meditated his death; but could not execute their wicked intentions, without the interference and penal ſanction of the Roman governor. Had the ſovereign power continued in their hands, the matter would have been brought to a ſpeedy iſſue; they would have diſpatched him and his Apoſtles, before they had fulfilled their miniſtry.

Though the Jews were in ſubjection to the Romans, and prevented from deſtroying Chriſtianity in its infancy; yet they were not baniſhed out of Judea, nor diſperſed into other countries; which was ſubſervient for the better introducing of the Goſpel into the world. The Gentiles, being aliens to the commonwealth of Iſrael, and ſtrangers to the covenant of promiſe, were not prepared to receive the Meſſiah; but the Jews were, to whom the prophecies, rites, ceremonies, and ſignificant ſymbols had been delivered. And therefore the devout and unprejudiced among them, when they ſaw his credentials, found upon inquiry that he had appeared at the end of Daniel's ſeventy prophetical weeks, or 490 years, ſprung from the tribe of Judah, and that Bethlehem claimed the honour of his nativity, as Micah had foretold, owned and received him. This opened a way for the eſtabliſhing of his Doctrine in Judea, whence it was gradually diffuſed and propagated in Gentile or Heathen countries.

The wide extent of the Roman empire greatly facilitated the progreſs of Chriſtianity. Chriſt could not have been crucified without the concurrence of its governor; who reported all remarkable occurrences to the Imperial court; and from thence, by means of the neceſſary connexion, correſpondence, and intercourſe, that were eſtabliſhed between Judea and Rome, and thence to all the world, the crucifixion became more extenſively known; whereas, if the Jews had been an independent nation, it would have been a private tragedy, unknown to any but themſelves.

Added to this, the peace that ſubſiſted among the nations was alſo very conducive to the ſpread of the Chriſtian faith. Our Saviour's miniſtry had been confined to the land of Judea; but, as the commiſſion of his Apoſtles extended to all the world, this peace opened a paſſage to them, throughout the vaſt Roman empire. So that they were not ſuſpected, queſtioned, impriſoned, and treated as ſpies or incendiaries on all the frontiers; which is commonly the caſe with ſtrangers, in time of war. Obſtructions of this kind would have been extremely detrimental to Chriſtianity, by checking it at the beginning of its progreſs.

The Romans, by the communications which they opened between the conquered provinces, not only united many nations, different in their language, in ſocial intercourſe; but, alſo, by their laws and commerce, as well as by the benign influence of letters and philoſophy, civilized their manners. As in that age, literature and ſcientific knowledge were much cultivated, it was a ſuitable period for publiſhing and ſpreading the Chriſtian religion. Men are always inquiſitive in proportion to their knowledge; and as Chriſtianity brought with it revelations and facts which were new and wonderful; improved and refined morality to a degree not known, either to the Jews, or the philoſophers; ſhowed the way to obtain the favour of God in this life, and everlaſting happineſs in the world to come; it could not fail of engaging the attention of the curious, inveſtigation of the learned, and obſervation of the religious. It could not ſo eaſily have

made its way in an age of ignorance and barbarism; some think the prophet Daniel expresly pointed out this learned and inquisitive age, where he says,—*Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased**.

This was also a period remarkable for candour and liberality among the Heathen. There was no persecution among themselves, they never once disputed the divinity of each other's gods; nor was any one despised because he worshipped differently from his neighbours. Six hundred nations, says Dionysius Halicarnassus, had taken up their abode in Rome, and every one observed its own peculiar rites†. In the Pantheon, the gods of every nation were installed, and liberty of conscience granted to every one to worship any he pleased. It is very probable, there would have been no objection to Christ being registered among the gods, provided all the others had kept their places. When Dionysius Alexandrinus, Origen's disciple, was brought before Æmilian, and exhorted by him to adore these gods, he replied, that Christians worshipped one God, the maker of all things. Why, true, said Æmilian, you may worship your own God as much as you like, if you will but worship our gods also‡.

2. The miraculous gift of tongues, which was conferred upon the Apostles, on the day of Pentecost, was peculiarly adapted to this enlarged and peaceable state of the Roman empire. For thereby they were qualified to travel among all nations, and address each, in its vernacular tongue, on the important subject of Christianity; which they could not have done, had they known no language but their own; for then they must have been under the necessity of learning in the usual way, which is the case in modern missions. How would this one circumstance have embarrassed them, and impeded the progress of religious truth. This wonderful gift, very much helped forward the Gospel; as it was a key to open the door into every

* Some of the above thoughts are taken from Archbishop Hort's Sermon on Haggai ii. 7. † Powell's Discourses, p. 156.
‡ Eusebius's Ecclesiastical History, Edit. 1683, p. 122.

land, if not into the heart of every perſon who rightly conſidered it. It was a ſtanding miracle in the world, and in the Church, while it continued. Plutarch ſays, Cleopatra was ſo ſkilful in the eaſtern languages, that ſhe could readily anſwer the Ethiopian, Hebrew, Arabian, Syrian, Median, and Parthian ambaſſadors who came to her; which made her a remarkable phenomenon in the literary world; the knowledge of theſe, and abſility to ſpeak them, ſhe had acquired by intenſe application. But the Apoſtles were inſtantaneouſly and miraculouſly empowered, not merely to underſtand, but ſpeak various languages; and this was entirely and abſolutely from God. When they received the gift of tongues, there were dwelling at Jeruſalem, during the feſtival of Pentecoſt, Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven, into which, by war and captivity, they had been ſcattered. And every man, whether Jew or Proſelyte, heard them ſpeak in his own language, with propriety, readineſs, and perſpicuity; when it was well known, that, but the very day before, they underſtood only the language of their own country.

Having touched upon the gift of tongues, we ſhall notice, that God was with the Apoſtles in their miniſtry, *bearing them witneſs, both with ſigns and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, according to his own will.* The miracles they wrought, were effects above the reach of human or natural power, and were produced in atteſtation of the truth of the doctrine which they advanced. They continually acknowledged that the power by which they performed them was of God, or that they were done in the all-powerful name of Jeſus Chriſt. Theſe were public and notorious, in reſpect of time, place, and the perſons on whom they were wrought; which carried demonſtration and ſenſible evidence along with them, and were mightily inſtrumental in more extenſively ſpreading the Goſpel.

It appears that theſe miraculous gifts were neceſſary to anſwer the end of their preaching; for it is not the method of divine Providence, to have recourſe to

ſupernatural means, unleſs where natural ones are inſufficient for the accompliſhment of the intended deſign. Admitting therefore the neceſſity, a queſtion will naturally ariſe, as a writer wiſely obſerves, concerning the continuance or duration of theſe gifts; how long the ſtate of the Church ſeems to have required ſo high a degree of evidence, and at what period of time Chriſtianity ſeems to have gained a ſufficient eſtabliſhment to ſupport itſelf, and make proſelytes without theſe.

The power of working miracles was not the ſole privilege of the Apoſtles. Our Saviour commiſſioned them to *Go into all the world, and preach the Goſpel to every creature;* with this promiſe,—*And theſe ſigns ſhall follow them that believe; In my name ſhall they caſt out devils, they ſhall ſpeak with new tongues; they ſhall lay hands on the ſick, and they ſhall recover,* &c. This promiſe, as it reſpects the preaching and propagating of Chriſtianity, was made only to the Chriſtian converts of the firſt ages, and, we may ſuppoſe, not in an equal degree to all, nor to each of the early ages; but according as the neceſſities of the Church, and the work of the miniſtry, might, at different ſeaſons, and in different circumſtances, require. That the miraculous powers were in common to all Churches, evidently appears, from the General Epiſtle of the apoſtle James, to the twelve Tribes ſcattered abroad; in which he directed *the ſick to ſend for the Elders of the Church to pray over them;* adding, that *the prayer of faith ſhall ſave the ſick, and the Lord ſhall raiſe him up.* And to confirm this, St. Paul enumerates the ſpiritual gifts, diſtributed to the ſeveral members of the Church in his time. *To one is given by the Spirit, the word of wiſdom; to another the word of knowledge; to another faith; to another the gift of healing; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another diſcerning of ſpirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues.*

Thus the power of working miracles not being limitted to the Apoſtles, it is very improbable that it ſhould not be continued in the Church after their times.

The Goſpel, it is true, had been widely propagated by them, *their ſound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world;* but, notwithſtanding this, they left Chriſtianity, under the preſſures and perſecutions of the civil power, conſequently required every help to ſupport it. Beſides, is it probable that miraculous gifts and powers would ceaſe at a time, when hereſies were continually ſpringing up to corrupt Faith of Chriſt, which was therefore chiefly to be preſerved by the diſtinguiſhing marks of the true Believers?—That they ſhould not ſubſiſt in the Church, when falſe Chriſts, and falſe prophets, were working pretended miracles, and lying wonders? I ſay, is it probable, contrary to the veracity of hiſtory, that no real miracles were wrought at that time, to ſilence and expoſe the former, from which our Saviour prophesied ſome danger of being deceived, to the very elect?

Can it be ſuppoſed, that miracles, which gave Chriſtianity birth, had through its infancy ſupported its credit, and publiſhed that it came from God, ſhould on a ſudden ceaſe; and leave it under the guardianſhip of the primitive fathers, incapable of producing (when both Jews and Gentiles would expect it, and their predeceſſors had done,) any extraordinary confirmation of their important commiſſion? Beſides, it does not ſeem conſonant with the uſual courſe of divine Providence, which, in bringing about its ends, generally proceeds ſlowly, and even when they are eſtabliſhed, ſuſpends its operations gradually; that the Chriſtian Church ſhould ſo ſoon, and ſuddenly, become deſtitute of thoſe miraculous powers, which at firſt laid its foundation, and had hitherto enlarged and ſupported it. A ceſſation of theſe on the exit of the Apoſtles, would have conſiderably diſcouraged their immediate ſucceſſors, as well as prevented that rapid acceſſion of Believers in future.

Hence it ſeems evident from Scripture, that a power of working miracles was not appropriated ſolely to the Apoſtles; for if the arguments now offered have any weight, it is highly probable that it was not confined to their times. But this, as a matter of fact, is ſup-

ported alſo by the teſtimony of Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory. The only point then to be ſettled is, the credibility of this, whether the Fathers of the Church have given us faithful accounts of real miracles wrought in the firſt ages of Chriſtianity; or handed down ſuch as they themſelves forged, or knew to be forged, or too credulouſly or ſuperſtitiouſly received as genuine.

It is true, theſe miracles are ſo ſtrongly and univerſally atteſted, that the veracity of Hiſtory muſt be but little ſhaken by the bare making of them the ſubject of doubt and diſpute. But as this has already been done, and the immediate and venerable ſucceſſors of the Apoſtles repreſented, as impoſing upon others, or being impoſed upon themſelves, it will afford the pious Chriſtian pleaſure, to trace out any mark of their ſincerity and ingenuouſneſs. And ſuch, it is preſumed, we muſt acknowledge their frequent accounts of the decay and revival of miracles at different periods, according as the ſtate of the Church required them. This by no means ſeems the conceſſion of the forgers of miracles, nor the credulous vouchers of them: the former would not willingly have ſuffered a decay of them, and that for years together, leſt they ſhould ſink into diſrepute, by being thought unneceſſary; but would have filled up thoſe periods with pretended ones.

Again, it appears much in their favour, that what they ſay on the ſubject, for the moſt part, is concerning ſuch miracles as were wrought by the Apoſtles, and ſerved the very ſame end of theirs, namely, the propagation and eſtabliſhment of Chriſtianity. Theſe, of any in the world, ſeem the worſt for impoſtors to counterfeit, and the moſt improbable for even incredulous men to believe.

And alſo what much eſtabliſhes the credit of theſe miracles is, that they were not confined to any one particular Church, but are mentioned as ſubſiſting in each; nay, are made the marks of the true one, in the diſputes of the Fathers, concerning hereſies, throughout the whole world. Now granting the leaſt degree of probability, of any Church attempting the

forging of ſuch miracles, as are in their very nature the moſt remote from a poſſibility of being counterfeited; yet it muſt appear aſtoniſhing, and miraculous indeed, that all Churches, how widely ſoever diſperſed, and diſtantly removed, from frequent communications with one another, ſhould audaciouſly attempt, and be lucky enough to ſucceed, with their credulous friends, and their inveterate prying enemies, in ſuch a preſumptuous undertaking.

3. The ſuperior excellence of the Chriſtian religion, when compared with all other ſyſtems, was one leading cauſe of its ſucceſs. We have, in a preceding part of this work, noticed the imperfect ſtate of religion and morality when the Chriſtian lawgiver made his appearance in the world. The legal ſervice of the Jews, which conſiſted of a great multitude of rites and ceremonies, from their number and nature very difficult to be obſerved, were *impoſed only until the time of the reformation*, or, as the original word ſignifies, *until the time of ſetting things right*, that were before out of order, and directing them to their proper ſcope and end. When our Saviour appeared, to introduce a new diſpenſation of grace, all things were in a very defective ſtate: the principles and manners of the people were greatly corrupted. But he came to fulfil the ancient types, lay aſide the carnal ordinances, throw off human impoſitions, eſtabliſh a pure and ſpiritual worſhip, and give a ſyſtem of doctrine, which, by the power of his Spirit, would make a valuable alteration in the Church, and in the World.

The Heathen were involved in thick darkneſs, and ſome of the moſt ſagacious and penetrating among them, had lamented the condition they were in, and avowed the neceſſity of a divine revelation.—Ye may even give over, ſaid Socrates, all hopes of amending men's manners for the future, unleſs God be pleaſed to ſend you ſome other perſon to inſtruct you.—Whatever is ſet right and as it ſhould be, ſaid Plato, can be ſo only by the particular interpoſition of God. Porphyry, though he lived after the coming of Chriſt,

and had a most inveterate hatred to the Christian revelation, in particular, was, according to his own confession, conscious, that some universal method of delivering men's souls, which no sect of philosophy had found out, was wanting*.

The superior excellence of the Christian religion, to all others, will appear, if we consider, that it embraces all the doctrines, and enforces all the obligations of what is called natural religion; also most completely and satisfactorily supplies all its defects; and more than this cannot be said of any religion. There is not any thing valuable in the writings of the Heathen philosophers, but what is found in Christianity. All the laws of justice, charity, meekness, gratitude, patience, and every other virtue recommended in their writings, are enjoined by Christ and his Apostles, and enforced with higher motives, and more powerful arguments, than the wisest sages among the Heathen possibly could do. The great and pious Richard Baxter, speaking on this subject, says, If there be any good in other religions, (as there is some in all,) it is all contained in the Christian religion, with the addition of much more: there is no truth nor goodness in the religion of the philosophers, the Platonists, the Stoics, the Pythagorian Bannians in India, the Bonzii in Japan, nor those in Siam, China, Persian, or other parts, nor among the Mahometans nor Jews, which is not contained in the doctrine and religion of the Christians. In a word, this contains the most divine principles, and excellent system of morals, in the whole world.

The religion of Christ, also supplies all the defects of natural religion. Had man continued in his original purity and innocence, the light he then had, would have directed him in all the branches of his duty, without the additional aid of divine revelation; and the disposition and ability of his mind would have continued in perfect harmony with his knowledge. But falling, by transgression, from that state of light and rectitude, rendered human nature so much im-

* See Dr. Clarke's Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion for some useful information on this point, p. 304—310. *seventh Edit.*

paired and defective, that it is a very insufficient guide alone, to direct us in all the important concerns of religion.

Chriſt hath brought to light, rectified, made clear, and ſettled our notions concerning, thoſe truths which reaſon was unable to reach, and were before but obſcurely and imperfectly revealed. To prevail with his hearers, to ſubmit to his authority, and embrace his religion, he declared that thereby, they would gain aſſurance in matters of the greateſt importance, of which they had before been ignorant, or uncertain; that they would receive ſuch clear light as would give them full ſatisfaction of mind at preſent, and conduct them in the right way to eternal life. He ſaid, *I am the light of the world; he that followeth me ſhall not walk in darkneſs, but ſhall have the light of life.* Light, by an eaſy and elegant metaphor, ſignifies knowledge, or inſtruction: becauſe what the former is to the eye, for guiding the body, the latter is to the mind, for informing the judgment, and directing the moral conduct. He therefore who gives inſtruction to others, may be called a light to them; and he who does this to all mankind, in affairs of the greateſt importance, and ſuch as would lead them, if purſued, to never-ending life and felicity, may juſtly be ſtyled *the light of the world, and the light of life.* As the Sun is to the natural world, the common fountain of light, ſuch is *He*, by his doctrines, and precepts, to the moral world.

The introduction of both moral and natural evil into the world, much embarraſſed the Heathen; who were conſcious of its exiſtence, but knew not its origin. The vain conceit of Pandora's box, was one of their inventions as a ſolution of this difficulty. Reaſon informs us, that intelligent and free beings, ought to paſs through a ſtate of probation, before they are unalterably fixed in one of happineſs; ſince otherwiſe God would not govern them according to their nature. As alſo it can produce many arguments in vindication of his wiſdom, holineſs, and goodneſs, which ſeem to be impeached by the ſtrong propenſities in our conſti-

tution to objects, that prove the occasions of sin, and by the many natural evils of which we complain, as want, pain, sickness, disappointments, &c. But divine revelation assures us, that this state of things, was not the original appointment of God. Dr. Haweis, in delineating man's primeval state, says, When God had pronounced man good, his soul was the habitation of the Deity. Those passions, now so turbulent and unruly, each ministered in humble subjection before the Lord. Love stood before the altar, and, pouring on the sacred incense, kept up the hallowed flame. Holiness guarded every avenue of the temple, and shut the gates to every vile intruder. Hope lifted up her hands and eyes to Heaven, and showed, by the intenseness of her countenance, where her anchor was fixed. Fear, with reverential awe, bowed down before the sanctuary, where yet no veil had hid the presence of the Deity. Joy told its raptures in hosannahs of never ceasing praise; whilst memory unfolded the volume of divine mercies; and conscience, yet unsullied, beheld, as God's vicegerent, the hallowed service, and gave its approbation as the voice of God. How art thou fallen, son of the morning! Who can reflect on the first beauteous image, and not drop a tear of sorrow!

This awful change took its rise from the wilful transgression of the first Parents of mankind. God answers for himself in Milton.

Man will fall,
He and his faithless progeny. Whose fault?
Whose but his own? Ingrate! he had of me
All he could have: I made him just and right,
Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall.
Such I created all th' etherial Pow'rs;
Freely they stood who stood, and fell who fell.
Not free, what proof could they have giv'n sincere
Of true allegiance, constant faith and love,
Where only what they *needs must do* appear'd;
Not what they *would?* What praise could they receive:
What pleasure I from such obedience paid,
When will and reason (reason also his choice,)
Useless and vain, of freedom both despoil'd,
Made passive both, had serv'd *necessity*,
Not me? They therefore, as to right belong'd,
So were created, nor can justly accuse
Their Maker, or their making, or their fate:

As if predeſtination over-rul'd
Their will, diſpos'd by abſolute decree,
Or high fore-knowledge. They themſelves decreed
Their own revolt, not I; if I fore-knew,
Fore-knowledge had no influence on their fault,
Which had no leſs prov'd certain unfore-known.

The eating of the forbidden fruit may to ſome ſeem a ſmall offence; and ſuperficial obſervers, heterodox Chriſtians, and deiſtical free-thinkers, have frequently repreſented it as ſuch. But if we attentively and impartially examine it, we ſhall find, that thereby was offered the greateſt indignity to God; his authority was trampled upon, the glorious perfections of his juſtice, truth, and power, deſpiſed; his pure and perfect image in man, which conſiſted in righteouſneſs and true holineſs, was defaced; and alſo the glory loſt, which man by his ſervice, ſhould have rendered him.

This firſt offence of Adam contained in it, many ſins; the whole moral law, to which he was ſubject, was violated; not only as the authority of the Lawgiver was denied, but as all the ſins of which he was capable, in his then circumſtances, met and conſpired therein. Such as, direct diſobedience and rebellion againſt God, the ſovereign ruler of the world; unbelief and wretched credulity, in believing the Father of lies, before God; luxury and inordinate indulgence of ſenſual appetite, idolizing and deifying his own belly; pride, and the luſt of ambition, in aſpiring after a higher ſtate of knowledge and felicity, than that in which he was placed; an envious diſcontent with God, as more an enemy to him than a friend; enormous ingratitude, when he had but newly received his being, with ſo many excellent endowments and favours, above all the creatures in the world: to break through all theſe obligations, and caſt off at once all ſenſe of the goodneſs of his Creator, concern for his honour, awe of his majeſty, reverence for his authority, and care of pleaſing him; what could be more hateful and baſely diſingenuous! In one word, as Dr. Lightfoot ſays, he broke all the ten commands at once.

Moreover, it was attended with many aggravating circumſtances. It was perfectly voluntarily commit-

ted in a direct manner against God, against the clearest light, and an express confession at the time that it was forbidden; the restraint was but of one tree, while a delicious plenty of the fruits of all the other trees in Eden was allowed him. It was the first human offence, making way for, and giving birth to, the innumerable sins and calamities, that have ever since abounded in the world.

In case man fell, divine mercy had decreed his recovery by Jesus Christ. God had provided an adequate remedy, *fore-ordained before the foundation of the world*; and, when required, promised that *the seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent*, i. e. confound the wisdom, and destroy the power and influence of the Devil. And St. Paul expressly assures us, that all the ill effects of Adam's disobedience, were, in the design of God, counteracted, by the perfect obedience, and atoning death of Christ. *As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation: even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. Where sin abounded*, in its pernicious fruits, *Grace did much more abound*, in its salutary effects. Milton introduces God speaking thus to the Messiah:

> Man shall not quite be lost, but sav'd who will,
> Yet not of will in him, but grace in me
> Freely vouchsaf'd: once more I will renew
> His lapsed pow'rs;—yet once more he shall stand
> On even ground against his mortal foe,
> By me upheld.—Be thou in Adam's room
> The head of all mankind, though Adam's son,
> As in him perish all men, so in thee,
> As from a second root, shall be restor'd
> As many as are restor'd, without thee none.
> His crimes make guilty all his sons; thy merit
> Imputed shall absolve them, who renounce
> Their own both righteous, and unrighteous deeds;
> And live in thee transplanted, and from thee
> Receive new life.

The manner of God's dispensing his mercy and grace to guilty and ruined sinners, is through the atonement of the blood of Christ, and his consequent intercession at his right hand in heaven. This doctrine is fully taught by the Christian revelation; whose Au-

thor said, *he was to shed his blood for many, for the remission of sins**. *He was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification*†. *Who then shall condemn us? It is Christ that died, and maketh intercession for us*‡. God, who is not only a being supremely good, but a most wise and holy governor, by giving his own Son, not only to become man, and to live on earth, for the promoting of piety and virtue, by his instructions and example, but to die on the cross as an atoning sacrifice, to magnify the violated law, hath tempered the manifestation of his mercy and grace to sinners, with a proportionable discovery of hatred to vice, and love of holiness. Pardoning sin, without a propitiation, would not have demonstrated, so fully, the concern of the divine Being to advance holiness, and discourage sin; nor have afforded such powerful motives to repentance as with it. If we seriously reflect on the agonies which the Redeemer endured, to take sin away, we cannot but be convinced of its great malignity; and stimulated not to abuse the goodness of God so grossly, as to continue practising what he hated more, than he loved the life of his Son.

After our Saviour had entered the garden of *Gethsemane*§, he began to be *sore amazed*, and to be *very heavy*; the original word signifies the most excessive racking grief. St. Luke says, *he was in an agony*, which imports the terrible throes and convulsions of soul under which he laboured. The cause of this agony, was the pressure of his Father's wrath, exacting the price, and inflicting on him the punishment due

* Matt. xxvi. 28. † Rom. iv. 25. ‡ Rom. viii. 34.

§ The word *Gethsemane* signifies an oil-press. It was a village situated at the foot of the Mount of Olives, so called, because of the many olives that grew thereon. The Jewish writers call it the Mountain of Unction—Mountain of Light—Mountain of Health, because oil is useful for all these purposes. At this village there were several gardens, into one of which Christ used often to retire, which might belong to some of his followers. It being a solitary place, at a sufficient distance from the city to be out of its noise, was very convenient for meditation and prayer. It was beyond the brook Kidron or Cedron, which word signifies the *black brook*, because its waters were tainted and discoloured with the filth of the city.—In a garden sin first entered into the world; the Messiah was first promised; he endured his agony; and was buried: which considerations should make such places peculiarly acceptable to Christians, and, when walking there, these are proper subjects for meditation.

for the ſins of mankind; upon whom, if it had been executed, it would have cruſhed and ſunk them into hell. The agony made him ſweat, as it were *great drops of blood;* though the air was ſo cold, that probably it congealed as ſoon as the flame within had forced it through his pores.

It is ſtrange that any ſhould deny, that Chriſt bore the wrath of God, and made ſatisfaction for the ſins of men. Why then was he in ſuch an agony, when no man's hand was upon him, when he had no ſtings of conſcience to torment, nor irregular appetites to diſturb him? What then was the cauſe of his diſtreſs, of *his ſtrong cries and tears?* Heathens have died with courage, Chriſtians with triumph: and whence is it that Chriſt, who was filled with the Holy Ghoſt, ſhould be filled with ſuch diſtreſs, ſorrow, and agony, though he was the Prince of peace and life, the Lord of glory? When ſhall we have ſome good reaſons for this, aſſigned by thoſe, who denied that Chriſt endured the wrath of God, and made a real and full ſatisfaction for the ſins of men? But if he did this, as moſt certainly he did, it is no wonder he was in ſuch an agony.

If it be objected, Where is the juſtice of puniſhing the innocent, that the guilty may eſcape? I anſwer, there is no injuſtice, in permitting thoſe evils to fall upon the innocent, which to the guilty are puniſhments of ſin, when important ends of the divine government are thereby anſwered; when the party ſuffering, voluntarily ſubmits to thoſe evils, and even they procure him the higheſt happineſs and reward: and this is the Scripture account of the affair. *No man took our Saviour's life from him,* but he freely and willingly *laid it down of himſelf**. And becauſe *he humbled himſelf, and became obedient to death, even the death of the croſs, God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name*†; and a *power to give eternal life to as many as he had given him*‡.—This is the diſtinguiſhing doctrine of the Chriſtian religion, and could not have been known but by a divine revelation.

* John x. 18. † Phil. ii. 8, 9. ‡ John xvii. 2.

Revelation assures us, that divine justice being satisfied by this atonement for sin, God's pardoning mercy extends to all sinners, on their repentance and believing in Christ. The first covenant did not admit of repentance, neither promised any thing but to perfect obedience. The light of Reason teaches us, that God is essentially good; but that does not infer he will forgive sin; which clemency has its rise in the benignity of his nature, but does not flow from thence by necessity; yet is the free act of his own will, and the work of his sovereign grace and pleasure. And supposing it could assure us of forgiveness on repentance, yet it cannot teach us, how far that remission shall reach, either as to persons or their offences; whether to great sins, repeated after vows and resolutions to reform, or those which have been productive of mischievous consequences to the world, beyond the power of the transgressors to repair, and especially where a long life has been wasted in the service of sin and satan. Whether sinners, guilty of greater or less crimes, though real penitents, shall receive pardon, reason is silent, and cannot give a distinct and entirely satisfying answer.

That it assures us of the forgiveness of all sins, on sincere repentance, is therefore an invaluable part of the Christian scheme, and admirably adapted to the sinful and guilty state of fallen men. That alone against the Holy Ghost being excepted and excluded; because it renders repentance impossible, destroying all the Gospel motives to it, by ascribing to the Devil and his angels, the fullest external evidence of its truth, namely, the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit. *Repent, and ye shall receive the remission sins**. *Repent, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out*†. True evangelical repentance, according to the Scripture account thereof, consists in a change of the mind, accompanied with correspondent works in the life. In the New Testament it is expressed by the Greek word μετανοια, which signifies a change of the mind from folly to wisdom, or from evil to good; and therefore im-

* Acts ii. 38. † Acts iii. 19.

plies reflection, conviction, compunction, and amendment.

But, though man is the subject of repentance, he cannot produce this change of disposition in himself; neither can it be produced by another until he yield thereto. As the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world; as the Son assumed our entire nature, and, by the merit of his death, sacrifice, and satisfaction, procured salvation for us; so likewise, was the Holy Spirit appointed, to perform his part in the glorious undertaking: to enlighten the human understanding, awaken the conscience, renew the will, remove prejudice against religion and piety, draw the affections from the fallacious, unsatisfying objects of this world, excite desires in the heart after divine things, and empower the soul to engage in the service of God, according to his revealed will. Without the assistance of this Spirit, man has no knowledge of his state and danger, nor any desire, or ability, to do the will of God. *O Lord*, says Jeremiah, *I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps**. Again; *Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil*†. What our Saviour says, corroborates and establishes this,—*Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness and judgment*‡. Here we have the agent, the Holy Spirit; the act, he will reprove; the object, the world; the subject matter, of sin, righteousness, and judgment. The original word ἐλέγξει, translated *reprove*, signifies in this place, that the Spirit, by uncontrollable argument, or undeniable evidence, will so convince, as to silence the adversaries, that they can make no objection. The Greek word παράκλητος, here rendered *Comforter*, properly signifies, he will act the part of an

* Jer. x, 23. † Jer. xiii. 23. ‡ John xvi. 7, 8.

Advocate, whoſe office it is, to convince of the wrong maintained. By the *world* is meant, both Jews and Gentiles, who, as contradiſtinguiſhed from the Chriſtian Church, oppoſed the Goſpel. By *ſin*, that of unbelief, not believing Jeſus to be the Son of God, the promiſed Meſſiah, and only Saviour of mankind. By *righteouſneſs*, that of Chriſt, both perſonal and mediatorial; that he was no impoſtor, nor deceiver, but holy in himſelf, and hath brought in an everlaſting righteouſneſs, for the juſtification of the guilty, and ſanctification of the unholy. And by *judgment*, the condemnation and overthrow of the Devil, i. e. Chriſt, according to the ancient promiſe, *having bruiſed the ſerpent's head*, ſpoiled principalities and powers, and deſtroyed him that had the power of death.—The Holy Spirit then muſt operate upon the minds of men, to convince them of their ſin and miſery, alſo of the complete remedy provided for them in the Goſpel.

Repentance, though abſolutely neceſſary, is not a ſtate of ſalvation, but preparatory thereto:—When St. Paul had preached *repentance toward God*, and his doctrine had made effect, he proceeded to that of *faith toward our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*. God, againſt whom man has ſinned, is the object of the one, and Chriſt, who is the Redeemer and Saviour, is the object of the other. Theſe two doctrines were joined together in Chriſt's miniſtry, and are what he commanded his Diſciples to teach; which they accordingly did, endeavouring, firſt to bring men to a ſenſe of ſin, then, encouraging them to believe in Chriſt. The Apoſtle Paul, without reſpect of perſons, teſtified theſe doctrines, both to Jews and Greeks. And if it is right to direct a ſick perſon to a ſkilful phyſician; it muſt be likewiſe to point a ſinner, filled with penitential ſorrow, to the only and all-ſufficient Saviour; whoſe invitation to ſuch is, *Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt.* Salvation is ſuſpended while unbelief predominates; but when a penitent ſinner, aided by the Spirit of truth, embraces Chriſt by a lively faith, he is ſaved from condemnation, and has peace with God. From a child of wrath, he becomes

reconciled to the Father through the blood of his Son; is tranſlated, from the bondage of ſin and ſatan, into the glorious liberty of the Goſpel; from being a worker of iniquity, he is ſweetly drawn, by redeeming love, to the practice of piety and virtue. Thus is he admitted into the favour of God, adopted into his family, and, through the merits of Chriſt, becomes entitled to all the privileges and bleſſings of the new covenant, in time, and to everlaſting ages.

Hence by grace through faith, which is of the operation of God, all real Chriſtians are ſaved. Such in the language of the Bible, are ſaid to be in Chriſt. They have *redemption through his blood, the forgiveneſs of ſins, according to the riches of his grace.* They are implanted or ingrafted into him, which is repreſented by a vine and its branches. *I am the vine*, ſays Chriſt; *and ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the ſame bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.* He is ſpoken of as dwelling in Believers, for ſays the Apoſtle, *Chriſt in you the hope of glory;* and again, is ſaid to *dwell in their hearts by faith.* He dwelleth in them by his ſanctifying ſpirit, and they live in him by faith, as their head of influence. Hence, ſays the ſame Apoſtle, *Your life is hid with Chriſt in God*, and *when Chriſt who is your life ſhall appear, then ſhall ye alſo appear with him in glory.* St. John ſays, *Truly our fellowſhip is with the Father, and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt;* whoſe *blood cleanſeth us from all ſin:* Chriſtians are *complete in him.*

The Chriſtian revelation furniſhes us with expreſs promiſes of divine aſſiſtance, to enable us, in this ſtate of trial, to hold faſt faith and a good conſcience, which, conſidering the exigency of our condition, are invaluable. We can ſcarcely be ſo vain as to imagine, that we are of ourſelves ſufficient to perform the duties of religion, withſtand our ſpiritual enemies, and bear up under the complicated ills of life. By our own natural ſtrength, we are not able faithfully to diſcharge any duty, and, to conſiderate perſons, apprehenſive of the excellence, and obligations of piety and virtue,

in all their branches, there is nothing ſo diſcouraging as a conſciouſneſs of their weakneſs, and the difficulty they find from within, to ſurmount temptations, and act with ſteadineſs in conformity to divine precepts, and the convictions of their own mind; yet nothing can be more encouraging to thoſe, than the aſſurance of almighty aſſiſtance.

God hath promiſed his Holy Spirit, to them that aſk him; that thereby they may walk in his ſtatutes, keep his judgments, and do them: for our Lord, a little before his departure, ſaid, that he would not leave his Diſciples comfortleſs, but ſend another Comforter to abide with them for ever. The Apoſtle James alſo ſays, *If any man lack wiſdom,* (or, by parity of reaſon, any other ſpiritual gift,) *let him aſk of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it ſhall be given him.* Theſe clear and expreſs promiſes are powerful motives to holineſs, obedience, and perſeverance therein, and ſtimulate Chriſtians to work out their own ſalvation. By his grace, if they devoutly aſk, and diligently concur with his will, they ſhall be effectually ſupported, againſt all temptation and difficulties; for what can be too hard to perform, too powerful to reſiſt, and too ſevere to ſuffer, when God is preſent, and aſſiſts them by his Spirit. *I can do all things,* ſays St. Paul, *through Chriſt who ſtrengtheneth me.*

How deſirable the aſſurance, that God, who is omnipreſent, and knows our frame, is tenderly concerned for our perfection and happineſs; and will proportion our ſtrength to our trials. *As thy days, ſo ſhall thy ſtrength be. God is faithful, who will not ſuffer* pious perſons *to be tempted above that they are able; but will with every temptation alſo make a way to eſcape, that they may be able to bear it.* He will make every trial contribute to the eſtabliſhment of their piety and holineſs, and the increaſe of their future happineſs. *Their light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* While thus encouraged and ſupported, *ſtrong in the Lord, and the power of his might,* no temptation can ſtand againſt them.—Reaſon, though it convinces

us we need this aid, can give us no aſſurance of it. Some indeed of the Heathen philoſophers comforted their diſciples, with the hope of divine aſſiſtance: Never, ſays Cicero, was a man made truly good, without ſome divine afflatus, or quickening influence: but they had no promiſe of this, to encourage or ſucceed their endeavours.

It is a great excellence in the Chriſtian revelation, that it not only diſcovers to us, thoſe general principles of the divine perfections, but places, in the cleareſt light, the important doctrine of providence, and gives it the ſanction of the moſt expreſs authority. Reaſon teaches this, but not equal to the account we have thereof in the Goſpel; which fully ſtates, and ſhows, that God's manner of exerciſing it, is perfectly conſiſtent with the liberty of moral agents. The ſacred writings inform us, that God loves holineſs, hates vice, and will finally make the righteous happy, and the wicked miſerable; but that he orders the particular circumſtances of all, eſpecially the pious, after a manner moſt conducive to their greateſt happineſs. The evils of life are not merely the reſult of the preſent conſtitution of things, eſtabliſhed by God for wiſe ends, but his fatherly chaſtiſements, deſigned for our amendment, or as trials, to exerciſe and advance our ſouls in holineſs. The ſmalleſt event is not exempted from his control, ſince *a ſparrow falls not to the ground without his notice*: and by him *the very hairs of our heads are all numbered.* This doctrine is wiſely calculated to comfort the righteous, amidſt the folly, weakneſs, and uncertainty, that inſeparably attend the preſent ſtate. It raiſes them above all temptation, frees them from perplexities, encourages them to diſcharge their duty, in its utmoſt extent---in whatever ſtation of life they may be placed; calms their minds amidſt the ruffling ſtorms of life, and, by grace, enables them to poſſeſs their ſouls in patience, until they enter the land of reſt and peace.

It is to the Goſpel we owe the full diſcovery of the reſurrection, both of the juſt and the unjuſt. The bodies of God's righteous ſervants ſhall be raiſed glorious,

powerful, ſpiritual, and immortal; and be in a far greater degree ſubſervient to the nature, powers, and happy ſtate of their ſouls, than they were before. Chriſtians are aſſured, that if now they govern their bodies, mortify their irregular appetites and paſſions, regulate the gratifications of ſenſe, in a conſtant ſubordination to the purity, perfection, and happineſs of the mind, they ſhall be recompenſed in kind, as well as degree, receiving, at the Laſt Day, bodies for ever exempt from all theſe infirmities, and ſufferings, which they now endure. Bodies, that by the pleaſures of ſight, harmony, beauty, and perfect activity, ſhall contribute in a far higher degree to the joy of the mind, than the greateſt ſenſual enjoyments can now do to our ſatisfaction, or the greateſt bodily ſufferings, for the cauſe of religion, to our uneaſineſs. Immortal health, unblemiſhed beauty, ſprightly vigour, glorious ſcenes to entertain the ſight, and celeſtial harmony to raviſh the ears, are encouragements which groſſer minds are capable of apprehending, and being influenced by. This great truth, reaſon could not diſcover, though, on the declaration and promiſe of God, and the ſenſible proof of its certainty, and deſireableneſs, in the reſurrection and glory of our Lord and Saviour, it aſſents thereto.—The ancient Philoſophers thought a reſurrection impoſſible; hence St. Paul ſaid, in the preſence of Agrippa, *Why ſhould it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God ſhould raiſe the dead?* But herein, *they erred, not knowing the Scriptures*, which aſſert this, *neither* knew they *the power of God*, which can effect it. He hath expreſsly promiſed this, and can as eaſily raiſe our bodies, as he made them at firſt; and a re-union with them, when they have their new qualities, will be as advantageous to our ſouls, as an everlaſting contact, in their preſent ſtate, would be unhappy.

And the Goſpel reveals, the perfect happineſs of the ſaints, and the complete miſery of ſinners, in the future ſtate. The Heathen had ſome imperfect notions of this kind; they did not imagine that death would be an utter extinction of their being, but that their

souls would survive their bodies, and pass into some other regions; for many vain and irrational things are said by them, concerning the entertainments of the Elysian Fields, and the punishments of Tartarus. They had no just sentiments concerning either the nature of the heavenly blessedness, or the torments of hell: these can be learned only from supernatural revelation. It is to Jesus, *who hath brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel*, that we are indebted for the true knowledge of the future state of recompences. He assures us, that if we approve ourselves faithful, during this short state of trial, we shall be received into glory, confirmed in holiness and happiness, and never more be in danger of sin, or suffering. *Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. The righteous shall enter into life eternal.* In the next state, that which is perfect shall come, and that which is in part shall be done away. There the faithful servants of God are in possession of that inheritance, which *is incorruptible, undefiled, and fadeth not away.*

The happiness of the future state is above our present comprehension; metaphorical terms are used, and images taken from material and earthly objects, to represent it to us; it being difficult, while our souls are clothed with flesh, to conceive of heavenly things otherwise than by these. It is set forth as consisting in the full enjoyment of the infinitely great, and all-sufficient God; as an open vision of Christ in his glory, and the most entire likeness to him, that we can possibly be exalted to; free from all sin, perfect in holiness, and resembling his glorified body, in our bodies. In short, it is spoken of, as entering into peace, and the joy of our Lord; as consisting of such excellencies, and noble pleasures, as exalt human nature, and raise its dignity equal to its delights.

The future state of those who, to the last, remain impenitent, is revealed as infallibly certain and inexpressibly miserable. *It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment. Every one shall be judged according to that he has done in the body.* The wicked

ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord. The puniſhment will be adequate to their crimes, and from which there will be no redemption; it is *everlaſting*, without any hope of deliverance. In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, it is ſaid, that between thoſe in heaven, and thoſe in hell, there is *a great gulf fixed*, and no paſſing from the one to the other. The wicked, at death, enter into this unavoidable and extreme miſery, which the ſacred Scriptures ſet forth under the moſt dreadful images, that can awaken, or alarm the human mind. In hell, *the worm* of conſcience *dieth not, and the fire* of wrath, unmixed with mercy, *will never be quenched.* There will be in the regions of the damned *weeping, wailing, and gnaſhing of teeth*, without ſo much as one glimpſe of light to cheer them in that *outer darkneſs*, or one beam of hope to flatter them with a deliverance. It would be well, if thoſe, who endeavour to enervate, and take away the force of theſe very awful accounts, would act more worthy their rational powers, in ſeeking, by a true and timely repentance, and *fleeing for refuge to lay hold on the hope* the Goſpel *ſets before them*, to avoid the infinite torments it threatens.—Theſe are ſome of the important doctrines of the Chriſtian religion, and, when delivered by the Apoſtles, and their immediate ſucceſſors, would, by the bleſſing of God, produce very ſerious and happy effects upon candid and thoughtful perſons, both Jews and Gentiles.

4. Among the cauſes of the ſucceſs of Chriſtianity, muſt be placed the peculiar character of the Apoſtles. Our Saviour, having to eſtabliſh a kingdom in the world, made choice of a few perſons to aſſiſt in this important undertaking; but did not go to the ſchools of the Prophets, (ſuch as they were then,) nor to thoſe of the Rabbis, to ſelect men verſed in the arts of reaſoning and oratory, and who could diſpute and perſuade mankind out of their ſenſes, and into the belief of ſenſible things, (or things proper to be the objects of ſenſe,) that they had neither ſeen nor heard. He did not go to the

camp nor to the caſtle, to find out well-diſciplined or courageous men, who were qualified for a bold encounter, could face an enemy in the field, or venture upon an extraordinary enterprize: nor did he go to the High-Prieſt's palace, nor to the Roman Hall, to ſeek the ſtateſmen, and thoſe who were ſkilled in politics, and in planning and executing a wide political ſcheme: neither did he go to the cities, to look for the polite and accompliſhed, nor thoſe who were acquainted with traffic and commerce, remittances and accounts: the more plain, ſimple, undiſguiſed, and undeſigning people were better fitted for his purpoſe; eſpecially as they were the more ſincere. He walked into the country, and picked up thoſe who (inured to hard labour, and great fatigue, with their nets, ropes, and boats, in the buſineſs of fiſhing,) were in the habit of indulging hope and exerciſing patience, and undertook to make them fiſhers of men. He called one indeed from the tax-office, or the receipt of cuſtom; but rather to diſburſe than increaſe what he had gained, and to communicate a treaſure that coſt him nothing. Having called theſe men, their art, ſkill, and buſineſs, were to fulfil the angel's ſong, ſounded forth at their Maſter's birth; to raiſe *glory to God in the higheſt*, diffuſe *peace on earth*, and diſſeminate *good will among men**.

Though all the Apoſtles, (excepting St. Paul,) were perſons of no polite education, yet they were not without good underſtanding, and unqueſtionably poſſeſſed genuine piety. They had been educated Jews, and were of the Jewiſh nation; and could not embrace the faith of Chriſt, till they had laid aſide their religious prejudices. Without a thorough conviction that he was the promiſed Meſſiah, and a ſupreme love to him, they would not have continued their profeſſion of the faith to the end of their days; but when expoſed to reproach, perſecution, nakedneſs, hunger, impriſonment, and death, would have ſwerved therefrom. After the day of Pentecoſt, their piety was uniform and deep. This was neceſſary, not only for

* Reynolds's Three Letters to the Deiſt, p. 226—228.

their own ſtability and comfort, but, without it, they could not have inſtructed others in the nature and way of ſalvation. Had their views of the Chriſtian ſyſtem been merely ſpeculative, or theoretic, and could they not have traced its converting energy, and transforming power on their own hearts, their intereſt in its diffuſion would not have been ſo ſenſibly felt, nor would they have urged it ſo affectionately and earneſtly upon others, neither ſo firmly ſupported it in the time of danger and ſuffering.

They preached to others, not only what they diſpaſſionately believed to be true, and free from error and abſurdity, but experimentally and powerfully knew ſo to be. The eternal Logos was *manifeſted in the fleſh*, whom they not only *ſaw*; but *handled:* he revealed himſelf to them, as he did not to the world; and they bore *witneſs* to the truth, as it is in him. On being interrogated, *Whom ſay ye that I am?* the Apoſtle of the circumciſion replied, *Thou art the Chriſt the Son of the living God.* Our Saviour put a high encomium on this admirable confeſſion of his faith, ſaying, *Bleſſed art thou, Simon Barjona: for fleſh and blood* (that is, his own reaſon, or any natural power whatſoever,) *hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.* The great Apoſtle of the Gentiles, declares, in ſtrong language, his faith in Chriſt, and experimental piety. *This is a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Chriſt Jeſus came into the world to ſave ſinners; of whom I am chief. What things were gain to me, thoſe I counted loſs for Chriſt, yea doubtleſs, I count all things but loſs for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord: for whom I have ſuffered the loſs of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Chriſt. I am crucified with Chriſt: Nevertheleſs, I live; yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the fleſh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himſelf for me.* Theſe important declarations give us to ſee, that their piety was real, inward, operative, and very conſiderable. They underſtood the doctrines Chriſt had taught them, truſted in him according to their direction, and

were saved. This religious experience is essentially necessary to the Gospel ministry:—he who is to be a guide to others, must himself see; for, *if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.* How can he, who does not assuredly know that Jesus hath saved him from his sins, preach Christ to others, or urge them to seek and secure what himself has not found? Or how can he instruct them in the way to salvation, when he never trod the hallowed path? Or how can he describe the sweetness of divine mercy, when he never tasted thereof? He who himself has found the way of life, peace, and love, can say to humble and sincere inquirers, *Be followers of me, as I am of Christ:*—and it is not only safe but pleasant following him, who is solicitous for his own, as well as the salvation of others. A Christian minister is to be *an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.*

Feeling the lively influences of the grace of God, on their own hearts, the Apostles were zealous in the discharge of their important duty. As their religion was the supreme love of Christ, their zeal was the fervour of that affection, animating them in their ministerial labours. Zeal is a vigorous, earnest, and vehement affection of the mind*, says a writer, which is good or evil, according to the principle from, and the end to which it is exercised. Another says, it is a mixed affection of grief and anger, proceeding from love; for what a man earnestly loveth, he is anxious to see honoured, and grieved when it is not. When exercised upon wrong objects, it may be great, but cannot be good; nay, the higher it rises, the worse it is; as is evident from the practices of heretics and fanatics; who, though they compass sea and land to make proselytes, render them twofold more the children of hell than ever. But when exercised upon right objects, and not proportioned to their magnitude and importance, it is then cold and lukewarm, as were the Laodicean Christians; when too hot, it

* Zeal comes from the Greek word Ζηλος, derived from ζεω, which signifies to be fervent, or hot as fire.

aſſumes the name of enthuſiaſm, fanaticiſm, or ſuperſtition. When rightly tempered and directed, it is an excellent and uſeful qualification, and what every miniſter of the Goſpel ſhould have.

Well-tempered zeal is found a diſtinguiſhing trait in the character of the firſt Preachers of Chriſtianity. Their enemies charged them with madneſs and diſtraction, for preaching as they did, and imputed their fervour, in the diſcharge of their office, to enthuſiaſm. St. Paul replies, *Whether we be beſides ourſelves*, in zealouſly recommending Chriſt to the attention and ardent affection of ſinners, ſo as to be tranſported beyond ourſelves, *it is to God: or whether we be ſober*, calm in our reaſonings, and dealing much in ſerious rational argumentation, *it is for your cauſe* or ſakes. *For the love of Chriſt conſtraineth*, or puts a pleaſing force upon *us*, to be zealous for his glory and intereſt in the world; bearing us on with a ſtrong, ſteady, prevailing influence, like that of the winds and tides when wafting a veſſel to its deſtined harbour; *while we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live, ſhould not henceforth live unto themſelves, but unto him which died for them and roſe again.*

The converſion, edification, and eternal ſalvation of men, are the chief things that miniſters of Chriſt ſhould have in view; and, to the performance thereof, no methods, that have a tendency to anſwer thoſe important purpoſes, ought by them to be left untried. That theſe valuable ends may be attained, they are to urge every proper motive, and addreſs every paſſion of the human mind; they are to endeavour to draw their hearers to the practice of their duty, by the words of love and the bands of a man; but when theſe prove ineffectual, and the arguments drawn from the condeſcending mercy of God, and the amazing love of the Redeemer, are ſlighted and diſpiſed, they muſt then have recourſe to conſiderations of a more awful and awakening nature. When their calm reaſonings are rejected, and the motives addreſſed to the more delightful affections of the mind, ſuch as hope, love, joy,

and gratitude, prove unſucceſsful, then they muſt urge ſuch things as are calculated to excite men's fears. With regard to this plan of proceeding, they have the Apoſtles of Chriſt for their examples. They conſidered themſelves as men, whoſe buſineſs it was *to win ſouls*, expecting to give an account to God; and, therefore, were ſolicitous to urge every thing that might ſerve as a motive to engage thoſe, to whom they preached and wrote, to a ſerious care about their ſpiritual and eternal welfare. What a variety of arguments do we find them to have uſed for this purpoſe. With what earneſtneſs did St. Paul beſeech the Chriſtians at Rome, *by the mercies of God, to preſent their bodies a living ſacrifice, holy, and acceptable to God, which was their reaſonable ſervice.* In what a lively and affecting view did he at other times repreſent the *love of Chriſt*, that it might conſtrain men to ſuitable returns of love and obedience. How does he ſet forth the privileges of the Saints, in order to engage ſinners to get a ſhare in them. And in what an attracting light does he propoſe the glory and happineſs of thoſe, who, by a ſincere and conſtant courſe of genuine piety, are preparing for the heavenly ſtate. But, at other times, he endeavours to impreſs men's hearts by awfully proclaiming, that *the wrath of God is revealed from heaven againſt all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men*; that *indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguiſh*, ſhall be the portion of *every ſoul of man that doeth evil*; and he enforces a due regard to religion, by an argument drawn from the ſolemn proceedings of the laſt judgment,—*Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we perſuade men.*

Chriſt was the conſtant, delightful, and ennobling theme of the miniſtry of the Apoſtles. They preached him prophetically, as the great object of prophecy; typically, as exhibited in the types, ſhadows, and ſacrifices of the ceremonial law; hiſtorically, as recorded by the four Evangeliſts; doctrinally, as ſet forth in their Epiſtles; experimentally, as formed in the heart of a true believer; and practically, that Chriſtians ſhould walk as Chriſt alſo walked. St. Paul, who

made him the chief ſubject of his ſtudy and preaching, in his Epiſtle to the Chriſtians at Corinth, ſays, *I determined not to know any thing among you, ſave Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified.* And again, *we preach not ourſelves,* (as deriving our authority from no other ſource; as lords over God's heritage; publiſhing our own private notions and opinions for the word and will of God; proſtituting this divine ordinance for filthy lucre; making it the vehicle of pride and vanity, or the means of oſtentation and popular applauſe,)—*but Chriſt Jeſus the Lord,* as the chief matter, and his intereſt and glory as the ultimate end of our miniſtry,—*and ourſelves your ſervants for Jeſus's ſake;* ready, from a ſincere and eſtabliſhed attachment to him, by all poſſible and proper means, to promote your beſt intereſts, even your preſent and eternal ſalvation; and if we have but the ſatisfaction of ſerving you in this matter, we deſire no more.—Here all miniſters of the Goſpel are preſented with an example, worthy of both their attention and imitation. Would they not inſiſt on their own prerogatives and powers, but direct the principal eſteem and affection of their people, from themſelves, to Chriſt the Head and Lord of the Church; and were their titles, (which, however innocent in themſelves, ſacred when firſt uſed, and almoſt unhallowed by diviſions about them,) explained by that of ſervants of the Churches for Jeſus's ſake, the ends of the miniſtry might be more effectually and happily promoted.

Dr. South, in one of his ſermons, has ſome very pertinent thoughts on preaching Chriſt; ſome of which are as follow: Chriſt hath a fourfold relation to preaching,—1. He is the text; and all preaching beſide Chriſt, is beſide the text; therefore, keep to your text. 2. Chriſt is the very foundation and ſubject-matter of preaching; and all preaching without him, is building caſtles in the air. 3. Chriſt is the life and ſoul of preaching; and preaching without him, is like a body without life and ſpirit. 4. Chriſt is the great end of preaching; which is to manifeſt his glory; and, when he is not preached, the great end of the miniſtry is

loſt.—Theſe remarks ſhould always be kept in view. How awful a thing it is, when a miniſter neglects or is aſhamed of his Maſter; ſo far forgets his commiſſion, as to leave him out of his ſtudies and ſermons, and takes Plato, Socrates, Zeno, Seneca, Epictetus, Tully, Cicero, or Demoſthenes, for his pattern, rather than the apoſtle Paul!

> Is Chriſt the abler teacher, or the ſchools?
> If Chriſt, then why reſort at every turn
> To Athens or to Rome, for wiſdom ſhort
> Of man's occaſions, when in him reſide
> Grace, knowledge, comfort——an unfathomed ſtore?
> How oft, when Paul has ſerved us with a text,
> Has Epictetus, Plato, Tully, preached! COWPER.

Did Auguſtin throw aſide his beloved Cicero, becauſe he could not find the name of Chriſt in his writings! And ſhall any miniſter of the Goſpel, reckon that a burthen, to which the Apoſtle ſo diligently attended, and eſteemed ſo diſtinguiſhing a favour, namely, *to preach the unſearchable riches of Chriſt?* Surely it ſhould be the conſtant ſtudy, ſupreme delight, and invariable practice of the ambaſſadors of Chriſt, to preach him, in his perſon, dignity, excellencies, offices, and benefits; and they ſhould never feel ſatisfied, unleſs their labours be crowned with ſucceſs, and their hearers give him their hearts.

The Apoſtles were very cautious in their manner of preaching Chriſt; particularly St. Paul mentions this, in direct and impreſſive terms, to the Chriſtians at Corinth. *And I, brethren,* ſays he, *when I came to you, came not with excellency of ſpeech, or of wiſdom, declaring unto you the teſtimony of God. And my ſpeech, and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wiſdom, but in demonſtration of the Spirit, and of power: that your faith ſhould not ſtand in the wiſdom of men, but in the power of God.* In his preaching, he did not avail himſelf of the embelliſhments of language, affect eloquent expreſſions, enter into metaphyſical diſquiſitions, and ſhow a variety of learning, that he might, by appearing a profound linguiſt, and ſagacious philoſopher, gratify their curioſity, and

gain their applauſe. Being a great ſcholar; a thorough maſter of the Jewiſh erudition, and well acquainted with the writings of the Philoſophers and Poets, he was capable of doing this; but declined a pompous manner of preaching Chriſt. Being perſuaded of the tranſcendent excellence of his ſubject, and aiming to preach in a manner conducive to the ſalvation of ſouls, he made uſe of great plainneſs of ſpeech, and left the effect to God. He ſtudiouſly avoided the faſcinating charms of oratory, and philoſophical arguments, that the faith of Chriſtians might not ſeem to have been obtained by human wiſdom, eloquence, ſkill, and arts of men, but by the power of God, and that it might reſt entirely on that foundation. And indeed, divine truths need not the meretricious ornaments of ſtyle, to render them more engaging, but ſhine beſt in their own native beauty and luſtre.

The plain nervous ſtyle of Dr. South, Dr. Bates, or Mr. John Howe; and, for elegance, Dean Young, or Mr. Seed, are admirable models for imitation; but the moſt excellent, for every Goſpel preacher, is the firſt Epiſtle of St. John. Archbiſhop Uſher uſed to ſay, it will take all our learning to make things plain. If this were uſed for that purpoſe, it would be the handmaid of religion, and uſeful to mankind. When we talk of learning, ſays a Clergyman of the Church of England, we ſurely mean ſomething more than the knowledge of words, that is, of ſounds, and the ideas of things to which they correſpond; for even ideots will learn theſe: and, to know that *Equus* in Latin, and Ιππος in Greek, ſignifies the ſame as *Horſe* in Engliſh, is not what we mean by *Learning*; for Wiſdom is always implied in the term.—True; and if languages were acquired to get at the knowledge of things, and uſed to make thoſe plain, without arrogance and oſtentation, which miſlead the mind, and darken the underſtanding, learned men would be oracles of wiſdom, and lights of the world.

The Apoſtles endeavoured to inform themſelves of the moral characters of their hearers, as alſo of their

predilection for, or prejudice againſt the Chriſtian ſyſtem, and adapted their diſcourſes accordingly. They addreſſed the underſtanding and judgment, and particularly applied ſuitable truths to the ſtate of their conſciences, that they might awaken them to a ſenſe of their danger, and ſo prepare their hearts for the reception of divine mercy. For inſtance, when St. Paul was before Felix, his preaching was ſuited to his moral character. The two vices, of which this Heathen governor was guilty, were injuſtice and intemperance; and the Apoſtle *reaſoned on righteouſneſs, temperance, and judgment;* put him in mind of another tribunal, more impartial and dreadful, before which he himſelf muſt one day ſtand, and be judged; than which, no doctrine could be more proper, nor better calculated to reform him. Skilfully and prudently accommodating doctrines to the various exigencies of the hearers, preaching the terrors of the law to ſome, and the comforts of the Goſpel to others, as their different caſes require, is an excellent method, and ſhows a man to be an able miniſter of the New Teſtament, well inſtructed for the kingdom of God. *Rightly to divide the word of truth,* is to give every text its proper meaning, every truth its due weight, every perſon the proper portion ſuited to his caſe; and, as becomes the oracles of God, with plainneſs, perſpicuity, humility, gravity, meekneſs, gentleneſs, fervour, boldneſs; aiming in all things at the pleaſing of God, and profiting men. Such preaching as this, will not be uſeleſs; but likely, both *to ſave themſelves, and thoſe that hear them.*

We have, in conſidering the ſucceſs of the Goſpel, ſeen, that the Apoſtles indulged not in eaſe and ſloth, but were perſons of great diligence, exertion, patience, and perſeverance, in the diſcharge of their miniſterial function. They were labourers, not loiterers, ſincere and indefatigable, travelling from place to place, preaching, where they could get a people to hear them, in public places, or private houſes, at the expence of worldly comforts, frequently loaded with reproach, and in the face of perſecution and death. A

modern anonymous poetic writer, in his admirable defence of miſſionaries, ſays,

> Let worldly men
> The cauſe and combatants contemptuous ſcorn,
> And call fanatics them, who hazard health,
> And life, in teſtifying of the truth,
> Who joy and glory in the croſs of Chriſt!
> What were the Galilean fiſhermen
> But meſſengers commiſſioned to announce
> The RESURRECTION and the LIFE TO COME?
> They too, though cloath'd with power of mighty works
> Miraculous, were oft receiv'd with ſcorn;
> Oft did their word fall powerleſs, though enforc'd
> By deeds that mark'd Omnipotence their friend.
> But when their efforts fail'd, unweariedly
> They onward went, rejoicing in their courſe.*

Their object was, to convert ſouls to Chriſt, to accompliſh which, they were willing to *ſpend and be ſpent.*

And, to finiſh the character of the firſt preachers of the Goſpel, though, in the faithful diſcharge of their office, they employed, to the utmoſt, their reaſon, grace, and miniſterial gifts, yet, on this ground only, did they not expect ſucceſs, but from the effectual bleſſing of God. St. Paul, by his maſterly reaſoning, convinced both Jews and Heathens of the truth of the Chriſtian religion, alſo planted Churches; and Apollos, with the gift imparted to him, watered them; *but God,* by his bleſſing, *gave the increaſe.* The celebrated philoſopher, Bonnet, of Geneva, has beautifully and convincingly ſet forth this important point. Whence has it happened, ſays he, that, in leſs than half a century, ſo many, and different ſects and nations, have embraced the new doctrine? How is *this ſeed of muſtard become a great tree?* And how has this tree over-ſhadowed ſuch immenſe countries? I know that, in general, men are not enemies to ſeverity of doctrine in point of morals, becauſe it ſuppoſes an uncommon effort of mind, and becauſe men have a natural taſte for perfection; not that they always ſeek after it; but are fond of it at leaſt in ſpeculation. A voluntary poverty, a great diſintereſtedneſs, and a painful and laborious life, eaſily attract the attention and eſteem of men. They are

* The Sabbath; a Poem. The Second Edition, p. 48.

very ready to admire all this, provided you do not oblige them to the practice thereof. If, therefore, this new doctrine publiſhed to the world had been purely ſpeculative, I can eaſily conceive that it might have gained the eſteem, and even admiration, of ſome people. They would have viewed it in the light of a new kind of philoſophy; and thoſe who profeſſed it, might have appeared to them ſages of a very peculiar ſtamp.—But this doctrine is not merely ſpeculative, it is chiefly practical, in the ſtricteſt and moſt literal ſenſe of the word. It is the moſt elevated kind of practical heroiſm; it enjoins an entire ſelf-denial, combats every paſſion, regulates every affection, checks every deſire, requires a total ſurrender of our hearts to the love of God and of our neighbour, demands continual and great ſacrifices; and promiſes no other rewards, than thoſe which the eye cannot ſee, and which the hand cannot feel.—That the charms of eloquence, the attractions of riches, the ſplendour of dignities, and the influence of power, may give credit to a doctrine, and gain it many proſelytes, I can eaſily conceive. But the doctrine of the *crucified Saviour* is taught by men void of art, and in the loweſt circumſtances, whoſe eloquence conſiſts more in things than in words; by men who preach doctrines oppoſite to the moſt received opinions; by men of the loweſt claſs, and who hold out to their diſciples no other expectations in this life, than ſufferings, tortures, and the croſs; and yet theſe are they who triumph *over fleſh and blood*, and convert the univerſe.—The effect was prodigious, rapid, permanent,—and exiſts to this day. I can diſcover no natural cauſe whereby it is produced, and yet one there muſt be, and that not inconſiderable: Where then is this cauſe? *In the name of the crucified man, the lame walk, the lepers are cleanſed, the deaf hear, the blind ſee, the dead are raiſed.* I am no longer at a loſs; every difficulty vaniſhes; the problem is ſolved; the legiſlator of nature has ſpoken; nations have heard him; the univerſe has acknowledged its maſter. He who could ſee in the muſtard-ſeed the lofty tree, was then the Meſſenger of that God who hath *choſen*

*the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty**.

Having entered ſo largely on the character of the Apoſtles, the limits of this work will not allow us to enter on that of their immediate ſucceſſors. Let the Reader, who has leiſure and inclination, peruſe the works of the primitive Fathers, that have come down to us; alſo the firſt volume of Dupin's Hiſtory of Eccleſiaſtical Writers, where he will meet with ample ſatisfaction. Daille, though ſevere, yet, in his *Right uſe of the Fathers*, (cap. 1.) acknowledges, That thoſe times which came neareſt to the Apoſtles, were neceſſarily the pureſt, and leaſt ſubject to ſuſpicion of corruptions either in Doctrine, Manners, or Chriſtian Diſcipline; it being reaſonable to believe, that if any corruptions have crept into the Church, it muſt have been by degrees, as it happens in all other things. Great indeed muſt have been their piety, and diligence in the miniſtry, to have carried on the glorious work begun by their Predeceſſors; whoſe recommendatory letters to the Churches, and to the world, were the ſouls converted by their inſtrumentality, *written, not with ink*, but *with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of ſtone*, as was the Law at Mount Sinai, *but in the fleſhly tables of the heart.* Souls converted from error to truth, their own righteouſneſs to Chriſt, and ſin to holineſs, are a miniſter's ſtrongeſt recommendation, and a deciſive proof of a divine call to the work in which he is engaged, and that he *has not run before he was ſent.* Succeſs will certainly attend the labours of thoſe, whom *the Holy Ghoſt hath made overſeers of the flock;* and who *have renounced the hidden things of diſhoneſty, not walking in craftineſs, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifeſtation of the truth, commending themſelves to every man's conſcience in the ſight of God.*

5. The perſecution, firſt from the Jews, then from the Heathen, ſo far from impeding, much facilitated

* Bonnet's Philoſophical and Critical Inquiries concerning Chriſtianity. p. 245—247.

the progreſs of the Goſpel. It was a trial of the reality and efficacy of the Chriſtian religion; and had a direct tendency to unite Chriſtians together, and keep them vigilant and holy; as well as to ſcatter them, who, wherever they went, publiſhed their faith, and elucidated its excellent precepts in their lives. Among the Heathen, it was thought a proof of puſillanimity, if an injury was not reſented. The Jewiſh Church could not, with any good grace, glory in tribulation, for the honour of God and the law, or for the ſake of their religion. They were, it is true, often great ſufferers, not for their piety, but uſually for their ſins, particularly that of idolatry. But the hiſtory of the Apoſtles, and ſucceeding ages, contains many relations of the ſufferings of Chriſtians, for the honour of Chriſt, and the furtherance of his religion.

Though the Goſpel breathes nothing but love, meekneſs, gentleneſs, and goodneſs, towards men; yet both unbelieving Jews and Gentiles were ſo prejudiced, that they rejected it with ſcorn, and oppoſed it with violence. The former perſecuted our Lord himſelf, *the Author and finiſher of our faith*, with implacable rage and malice, and that by a death the moſt ignominious and painful. Before he left the world, the Diſciples were aſſured, by their divine Maſter, that they were to expect no better treatment. *If they have perſecuted me, they will alſo perſecute you.* And in particular he informed them, that theſe perſecutions would be the conſequence of their preaching the Goſpel; nay, that they would be begun under the pretence of extraordinary zeal for God and preſervation of his ſervice. The fulfilment of this we have already related; and St. Paul ſays of the Apoſtles in general, *I think that God hath ſet forth us the Apoſtles laſt, as it were appointed to death. For we are made a ſpectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.*

The Churches they planted were perſecuted alſo. The Chriſtians in Judea, immediately on receiving the Goſpel, ſuffered great afflictions. *But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illumi-*

nated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; partly whilſt ye were made a gazing-ſtock, both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly whilſt ye became companions of them that were ſo uſed. For ye had compaſſion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the ſpoiling of your goods, knowing in yourſelves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring ſubſtance. The converts of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Aſia, and Bithynia, to whom St. Peter wrote both his Epiſtles, were ſufferers in the cauſe of Chriſtianity; they were *in heavineſs through manifold temptations*, expoſed to *fiery trials*, and made *partakers of Chriſt's ſufferings*. The Churches of Macedonia, *had a great trial of affliction.* The Church at Theſſalonica, had *perſecutions and tribulations*; and the members *became followers of the churches of God in Judea, and ſuffered like things of their own countrymen, even as they had of the Jews.* The Church at Corinth, *endured the ſame ſufferings which the Apoſtles alſo ſuffered.* The apoſtle John, from Patmos, wrote to the ſeven Churches of Aſia, that he was their *brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom, and patience of Jeſus Chriſt*; which plainly intimates, that all theſe Churches either had ſuffered, or did, at that time, ſuffer perſecution. *Yea*, ſays St. Paul, *and all that will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus, ſhall ſuffer perſecution.* And all this was chiefly inflicted by the Jews; but, when Jeruſalem was deſtroyed by Titus, they were rendered almoſt incapable of troubling the Church of Chriſt.

For ſome centuries after, the Chriſtian Church waded through a ſea of blood, ſuſtaining ten great and dreadful perſecutions, under the Heathen Emperors; beſides the leſs and more tranſient ſtorms, to which Chriſtians were expoſed. It is allowed, ſays Dr. Lardner, that the Roman emperors did not openly perſecute the Chriſtians, till they became ſo numerous, that the Heathen people were apprehenſive of the total overthrow of their religion*. The civil conſtitution of Rome was founded upon perſecuting principles. Tertullian ſays, there was an ancient de-

* Jewiſh and Heathen Teſtimonies, vol. 1. p. 323.

cree, ſpecifying that no Emperor ſhould conſecrate a new god, unleſs he were approved by the ſenate. And, according to Cicero, one of the ſtanding laws of the Republic was to this effect---That no one ſhould have ſeparately new gods, nor worſhip privately foreign ones, unleſs admitted by the common wealth; which he endeavours to defend by ſaying, That for perſons to worſhip their own, new, or foreign gods, would be to introduce confuſion and ſtrange ceremonies in religion; alſo, That it is the part of a wiſe man to defend the cuſtoms of his anceſtors, by retaining their ſacred rites and ceremonies.---It is no wonder therefore that Chriſtianity, which was ſo perfectly contrary to the whole ſyſtem of Pagan theology, ſhould be viewed with an evil eye; or that when the number of Chriſtians increaſed, they ſhould incur the diſpleaſure of the civil magiſtrate, and the cenſure of the penal laws that were in force againſt them*.

The *firſt* perſecution was raiſed by the emperor Nero, A. D. 65, concerning whom, we have the teſtimony of Tacitus and Suetonius, which, as they were Roman citizens and Heathens, cannot be ſuſpected as falſe. Nero ordered the burning of Rome, that he might have the honour of rebuilding it more magnificently, and calling it after his own name; to exculpate himſelf from the odium thereof, he accuſed the Chriſtians of the crime, and, to induce people to believe him, in a moſt cruel manner put great numbers of them to death. Tacitus's words are,---Wherefore, to deſtroy this rumour altogether, Nero furniſhed criminals, and puniſhed, with the moſt exquiſite ſufferings, thoſe whom the vulgar call Chriſtians, and who are hated on account of their crimes. Theſe were made a ſport of in their death, being covered with the ſkins of wild beaſts, that they might be torn to pieces by dogs, or nailed to croſſes, or covered with inflammable matter, and when the day-light failed, they were burned to give light at night. For theſe ſpectacles Nero gave his gardens, and at the ſame time exhibited there the Circenſian games, mixing with the multitude in the habit

* Chandler's Hiſtory of Perſecution, p. 17, 18, 20.

of a charioteer. Hence even towards the criminals and thoſe who merited the ſevereſt tortures, commiſeration aroſe, as alſo towards perſons periſhing not for the public good, but to gratify the cruelty of one man*. Suetonius ſays, The Chriſtians, (whom he deſcribes as a people addicted to a new and miſchievous ſuperſtition,) were alſo puniſhed with death†. Theſe ancient Hiſtorians call Chriſtianity a miſchievous ſuperſtition; and Tacitus himſelf expreſsly affirms, that the profeſſors thereof were univerſally hated for their crimes; which aſſertion to ſome may ſeem ſtrange, till they conſider, that this religion required all men to turn from the worſhip of idols, and ſerve the living God.

The *ſecond* perſecution happened under Domitian, about A. D. 90; during which St. John was baniſhed to *the Iſle of Patmos for the word of God, and for the teſtimony of Jeſus;* and ſome think about 40,000 Chriſtians ſuffered martyrdom at that time. Flavius Clemens the conſul, a near relation of the emperor, was put to death even in the time of his conſulſhip. His wife Flavia Domitilla, alſo nearly related to Domitian, was baniſhed to Pandeteria. Glabrio likewiſe, a perſon of conſular dignity, after having fought with wild beaſts, was capitally puniſhed. However, this perſecution did not continue long, for Euſebius aſſerts, that by an edict in favour of the Chriſtians, the emperor put a ſtop to all further proceedings againſt them‡. Tertullian alſo affirms, that not being cruelty in perfection, as was his predeceſſor, the remains of ſtruggling humanity ſtopped the enterprize; and alſo adds, made him recall the Chriſtians he had baniſhed§. The edicts of Nero and Domitian were reſcinded by the ſenate‖.

The *third* began under Trajan, A. D. 100. He publiſhed no general edict againſt the Chriſtians, but commanded his officers to ſuppreſs all private aſſocia-

* Annal. 15. Tacitus is ſuppoſed to have been fifteen years old at the death of Nero, A. D. 67, and therefore may have been an eye-witneſs of this perſecution.

† Nero, cap. 16. Suetonius flouriſhed in the reign of Veſpaſian.

‡ Eccl. Hiſt. lib. 3. cap. 20. § Apol. cap. 5.

‖ Reeves's Apologies, vol. 1. p. 181.

tions; and this occaſioned diligent ſearch to be made after them, and prevented their aſſembling together. In anſwer to a letter of Pliny the younger, the Roman governor of Pontus and Bithynia, he ordered, That the Chriſtians ſhould not be ſought after, but if accuſed and convicted of being ſuch, they ſhould be puniſhed; they only were excepted who would deny the name, and give an evident proof of their ſincerity by worſhipping his gods. Pliny, in his Letter* to the Emperor, exculpates the Chriſtians from being guilty of any crime but that of their religion; ſaying, Their whole crime or error conſiſted in this, that at ſtated times they were uſed to meet before day-light, and ſing a hymn to Chriſt as God; and bound themſelves by an oath not to commit any wickedneſs. Thoſe Chriſtians who were brought before his tribunal, and reſolutely adhered to the faith of Chriſt, Pliny concluded that their ſtubborneſs and inflexible obſtinacy deſerved puniſhment, and ordered them to be led away to execution. No doubt but the idol prieſts, whoſe office was nearly annihilated, and livings deſtroyed, would be active in accuſing the Chriſtians; and the perſecution muſt have been very ſevere. In this reign, Ignatius (brought up with the Apoſtles in his younger years, became the diſciple of St. John, and made biſhop of Antioch in Syria, A. D. 70,) was carried priſoner to Rome; and as Euſebius informs us, ſuffered martyrdom in the tenth year of Trajan. He wrote ſeven Epiſtles, mentioned by Euſebius, Irenæus, Jerome, and others, which are ſtill extant.

The *fourth* began A. D. 126, in the 9th year of Adrian's reign, and was continued under the emperor Antoninus Pius, who ſucceeded to the empire A. D. 138.---While Adrian tarried at Athens, happening to be initiated into the Eleuſinian myſteries, he expreſſed ſuch zeal about the Heathen ſuperſtition, that many put the former edicts againſt the Chriſtians in execution. By this means, the perſecution became exceedingly hot; and in conſequence thereof, Quadratus biſhop of Athens, and Ariſtides a philoſopher in that city, pre-

* 97th of the 10th book of Pliny's Letters.

ſented apologies to Adrian, wherein they defended the Chriſtian religion againſt the objections of its adverſaries; and, in confirmation of its divine origin, ſtrenuouſly urged our Lord's miracles, particularly his curing diſeaſes, and raiſing the dead. Theſe apologies, which are now loſt, together with letters from Serenius Granianus, repreſenting the injuſtice of the procedure againſt the Chriſtians, greatly aſſuaged the emperor's zeal, and made him write to the governors of the provinces, and particularly to Minucius Fundanus, proconſul of Aſia Minor, commanding, That no Chriſtian ſhould be diſturbed on account of his religion; and that whoſoever accuſed them without alleging any other crime againſt them ſhould be puniſhed.—In the ſecond or third year of Antoninus Pius, the Chriſtians were harraſſed in ſeveral parts of the empire, by reaſon of the former emperors' edicts being put in force againſt them. On this occaſion, Juſtin Martyr wrote an apology; inſcribing it to the emperor, his adopted ſons, the ſenate, and the whole people of Rome; to which he annexed a copy of Adrian's reſcript. Theſe, and the informations ſent him from different parts of the empire, ſo impreſſed Antoninus Pius, who was naturally of a merciful diſpoſition, that he publiſhed a letter or reſcript in behalf of the Chriſtians, wherein we are told he inſinuated that they got the better of their oppoſers by laying down their lives in ſupport of their cauſe, and ordered, That no Chriſtian, without being guilty of a crime againſt the government, ſhould be diſturbed. But the emperor, finding that his reſcript did not reſtrain the malice of thoſe who were inimical to the Chriſtians, gave an edict to be publiſhed at Epheſus in the hearing of the conſul of Aſia, ordering among other things as follows: If any ſhall ſtill proceed to create trouble to one that is a Chriſtian, let him who is indicted be diſcharged, though he is found to be a Chriſtian, and let the informer himſelf undergo the puniſhment. Euſebius informs us, that Antoninus Pius ſent his reſcripts in favour of the Chriſtians to the following cities by name, Lariſſa, Theſſalonica, Athens, and in general through all Greece. Hence we may

conclude, that in theſe places more eſpecially, the Chriſtians were numerous, and the perſecutions violent. Under this perſecution, it is aſſerted that ten thouſand ſuffered the cruel death of crucifixion.

The *fifth* began in the ſecond year of the reign of the emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Philoſophus, A. D. 162. In the firſt year of this perſecution, Juſtin Martyr publiſhed another apology, in which is intimated that he expected Creſcens the Cynic, with whom he had been engaged in a diſpute concerning the Chriſtian religion, would ſeize, and have him condemned to death. Euſebius ſays, Juſtin actually preſented this agology to the emperor. But it neither ſaved his own life, nor ſtopped the perſecution. For many ſuffered martyrdom at Rome, and among the reſt Juſtin himſelf, A. D. 164. However, the ſufferings of the Chriſtians did not become general till the ſeventh year of the emperor's reign, A. D. 168, from which time the perſecution is commonly dated. In the ſeventeenth year of the reign of this prince, the perſecution againſt the Chriſtians continued with great violence in ſeveral parts of the world, through the enmity of the people in the cities. What great multitudes of martyrs there were throughout the whole empire, may be concluded from what happened in France, where the perſecution was particularly violent: eſpecially at Lyons, and in the neighbouring country; the Chriſtians there being put to death in great numbers, and by the moſt exquiſite torments. At Lyons and Vienna they are celebrated for bearing their ſufferings with great patience and conſtancy: and among the reſt, Pothinus, biſhop of Lyons, then about ninety years old, who, having ſuffered many indignities, died in priſon.—This perſecution raged likewiſe in the oppoſite extremity of the empire. Polycarp, who had been taught by the Apoſtles, and by them made biſhop of Smyrna, A. D. 82, was burnt alive in the 100th year of his age, A. D. 166. Irenæus, Jerome, and others, mention an excellent Epiſtle of his written to the Philippians; this Euſebius has preſerved. Celſus now lived, and beheld the ſufferings of the Chriſtians in this and other perſecutions.

—At length, Melito and Apollinaris having by their apologies addreſſed the emperor, and many governors of provinces having wrote to him favourably of the Chriſtians, he put a ſtop to the ſhocking cruelties, which for ſeveral years had been exerciſed toward them, in all parts of the empire.

The *fifth* happened in the reign of Severus, A. D. 203. While abſent in the Eaſt, his favourite Plautian, an African, who governed the city in his abſence, put many Chriſtians to death. This moved Tertullian to publiſh an apology inſcribed to the ſenate and magiſtrates of the Roman empire. About this time a variety of crimes were charged upon the Chriſtians: ſuch as, that they deſpiſed the gods whom the emperors themſelves worſhipped, and who had raiſed the empire to ſuch a pitch of greatneſs; that by their impieties they had brought many calamities upon the world; that they worſhipped the head of an aſs, &c. In his apology, Tertullian demonſtrated the falſehood of theſe, and all other crimes of which they were accuſed, and ſhowed both the ſoundneſs of their faith, and the ſanctity of their lives. The effect of this apology was, that the perſecution was relaxed, eſpecially on the return of the emperor, who had not countenanced theſe ſeverities. However, not long after this, Severus himſelf became very cruel towards the Chriſtians; for in the tenth year of his reign, A. D. 203, he publiſhed an edict againſt them, in which the Jews likewiſe were included. His pretence for this was, that the Chriſtians were impious perſons, who deſigned nothing but rebellion againſt the ſtate; and his edicts were executed with great inhumanity. Among many who ſuffered, were Victor biſhop of Rome, Irenæus biſhop of Lyons in Gaul, Leonidas, the father of Origen, who was beheaded at Alexandria in Egypt; Potamiæna, an illuſtrious female and her mother, who, after various torments, were deſtroyed by the flames; as was Baſilides an officer who aſſiſted at their execution.

The *ſeventh* was raiſed by the emperor Maximinus, A. D. 236. He was a perſon of a cruel diſpoſition;

which he ſhowed, as in other things, ſo by his perſecutions of the Chriſtians, who were obnoxious to him, chiefly becauſe they ſupported his rivals the Gordians. The biſhops and ordinary miniſters were the principal objects of his fury; for he conſidered them as the great propagators of Chriſtianity. The ſeverities cauſed Origen to write a treatiſe on martyrdom. However, they were ſhort of duration, not ſo violent as the former perſecutions, and raged principally in the provinces where the emperor reſided; a little previous to whoſe death, it is ſaid, that he himſelf put a ſtop to the perſecution by his reſcripts, in which were the following remarkable words:—Whereas of a long time it hath been found, that the Chriſtians can by no means be reclaimed from their obſtinacy, therefore the governors of cities are hereby diſcharged from proſecuting that deſign (of reclaiming them by perſecution) any longer.

The *eighth* was raiſed by the emperor Decius, immediately on his obtaining the purple, A. D. 251. This was the ſharpeſt perſecution that had hitherto afflicted the Chriſtian Church. Zealous for the cauſe of declining Paganiſm, the emperor with grief beheld it undermined by the progreſs of Chriſtianity, and reſolved, if poſſible, to deſtroy that rival worſhip. Beſides, he hated the Chriſtians, from ſpite of his predeceſſor Philip, who was ſo great a favourer of them, that ſome have believed he was a Chriſtian. The perſecution raged violently all the time of this ſhort reign, and there was no part of the empire which did not feel its dreadful effects. The Chriſtians were driven from their houſes, deprived of their eſtates, and tormented in their bodies. The inſtruments of torture made uſe of againſt them were racks, wild beaſts, ſcalding wax, ſharp ſtakes, and burning pincers. And now, the laws of nature and humanity being utterly neglected, friend betrayed friend, and brother the brother; nay, children delivered up their parents; ſo that multitudes were ſlain by the public executioners, and among the reſt the biſhops of the more noted cities, who, being remarkable for their ſtation and influence

among Chriſtians, were in all perſecutions generally the firſt who ſuffered. Nicephorus affirms it eaſier to count the ſands of the ſea ſhore, than to reckon up all the martyrs who ſuffered under Decius. Great multitudes therefore fled into exile, chooſing to be expoſed to wild beaſts and famine in the deſerts, rather than truſt the mercy of men who reſembled them in ferocity. Among the reſt, one Paul of Thebais, a youth fourteen years old, fled into the deſerts of Egypt, and took up his reſidence in a cavern or rock, where he lived a ſolitary life ninety-eight years, and became the father of the Anchorites or Hermits, and of all ſuch as afterwards practiſed a mortified life.

The *ninth* was raiſed by the emperor Valerian, A. D. 258. The former part of this reign was acceptable to all perſons, and among the reſt to the Chriſtians, who received many favours from the emperor; but, about the fourth year of it, he was ſeduced by an Egyptian magician, who repreſented, that, to render public affairs proſperous, nothing was more neceſſary than to ſuppreſs the Chriſtian worſhip, ſo hateful to the gods, and reſtore the ancient religion. To perſuade the emperor and his counſellors to this meaſure, was not difficult. The Roman common-wealth, they thought, had acquired its greatneſs under the protection of the gods. They obſerved, that no ſtop had been put to their conqueſts till Chriſtianity began to prevail. In proportion to the ſpreading of this faith, the calamities had multiplied. They therefore referred the whole greatneſs of their ſtate to the favour of the gods anciently worſhipped; and all its misfortunes to the neglect of the primitive religion, and the prevalence of Chriſtianity. By order therefore of Valerian and his ſon, the Chriſtians were inſtantly treated with the utmoſt barbarity every where. But ſo far were theſe ſeverities from having the deſired effect, that the Almighty, being diſpleaſed with the unprovoked ſufferings of his ſervants, ſent from the north more terrible ſcourges than ever upon the empire. In theſe calamities the emperor was the principal ſufferer; for, after making ſome reſiſtance, he was obliged to turn

his arms againſt Sapores king of Perſia, who, before they came to battle, took him priſoner. From this time Valerian was in great miſery. Sapores treated him with the utmoſt indignity, making uſe of him as a footſtool in mounting his horſe. At length, after ſeven years confinement, he deprived him of ſight, and put him to death.---Galienus, Valerian's ſon, who had concurred in the edicts againſt the Chriſtians, by the peſtilences, inundations, famines, and other calamities, which afflicted the empire in his father's reign, was ſo wrought upon, that, hoping to appeaſe the the Divinity, he relaxed the perſecution againſt the Chriſtians, and publiſhed edicts in their favour.

The *tenth* was begun by the emperor Dioclesian, A. D. 303. He, during the courſe of a proſperous reign, had favoured the Chriſtians for the ſpace of twenty years. But coming to the city of Nicomedia in Bithynia, Cæſar Galerius, who hated the Chriſtians, prevailed on him, A. D. 303, to give orders for demoliſhing the cathedral church there, built oppoſite to the imperial palace. A Chriſtian publicly tore the edict, and was puniſhed. A few days after, part of Galerius's palace was deſtroyed by fire, and the Chriſtians were ſuppoſed to be the incendiaries. On this, Dioclesian publiſhed an edict, commanding the Chriſtian Churches to be pulled down, their bibles to be burned, thoſe who had obtained any office in the magiſtracy to be degraded, and the meaner ſort to be ſold for ſlaves. But theſe were only the beginnings of the perſecution; for, ſoon after Dioclesian, with the conſent of his colleague Maximian, publiſhed an edict, ordering the Chriſtian biſhops to be bound with chains, and forced by all manner of torture to ſacrifice to idols. This was ſo rigorouſly executed, that in no more than the ſpace of one month, it is ſaid, ſeventeen thouſand Chriſtians were put to death, excluſive of the multitudes that were baniſhed. In A. D. 304, Dioclesian and Maximian reſigned the purple; the former in Nicomedia, where he named Galerius his ſucceſſor; the latter at Milan, after having ſubſtituted Conſtantius Chlorus in his place. The new emperors

divided the provinces between them: the former took Spain, Gaul, Britain, and Germany; the latter had all the reſt. Galerius, finding the government of ſo many provinces too heavy for him, named as Cæſars, Maximinus, his own nephew, by his ſiſter, and Severus. To the latter he gave the government of Rome, Italy, and Africa; to the former, that of the eaſtern provinces, reſerving to himſelf the management only of thoſe which belonged to Illyricum and Greece. Conſtantius in the Weſt by his edicts relaxed the perſecution againſt the Chriſtians; but Galerius and the Cæſars continued it in the Eaſt.—A while after this, Severus happening to be abſent from Italy, Maxentius, ſon of Maximian the former emperor, was himſelf proclaimed emperor at Rome by the ſenate and people. He relaxed the perſecution in the eighth year thereof. Severus marched againſt him; but, when under the walls of Rome, being deſerted by his ſoldiers, was taken and killed. Galerius next marched into Italy; but, his troops beginning in like manner to deſert, was obliged to return. About two years after this, falling ſick, he publiſhed an edict in his own name, and in that of Conſtantine, Conſtantius's ſon, whom he had kept as an hoſtage for the good behaviour of his father. In this edict he ordered, That the Chriſtians from thenceforth ſhould be ſpared, and their churches and meetings allowed them: intreating, at the ſame time, That they would offer up public prayers for the emperor. On the death of Severus, Galerius had declared Licinius, Auguſtus, and on his own death, as he had pointed him out as his ſucceſſor, he was generally acknowledged emperor. Soon after this, Conſtantine, who had eſcaped from the Eaſt, and whoſe father was now dead, being invited by the ſenate and the people into Italy, marched againſt Maxentius, whom they had formerly made emperor, and defeated him. After the victory, CONSTANTINE DECLARED HIMSELF A CHRISTIAN. This circumſtance induced Licinius to allow the Chriſtians in his part of the empire conſiderable privileges. But Maximinius Cæſar, who governed in the Eaſt as his lieutenant,

thinking his ſtation inferior to his merit, proclaimed himſelf emperor, and revoked them. Licinius, in a great pitched battle, defeated him; on which, he allowed the Chriſtians their former privileges, reſolving to try his fortune anew: but was cut off by death before he could execute his deſigns. Maximinus being now out of the way, Licinius began to alter his behaviour towards the Chriſtians. Openly eſpouſing the cauſe of Heatheniſm, he prohibited the biſhops from viſiting in the houſes of the Gentiles, leſt in their converſation they might propagate their principles; and ſoon after raiſed a violent perſecution againſt the whole Church in thoſe parts. So that, as Euſebius obſerves, the Eaſt and Weſt were like day and night, a dreadful darkneſs overſpreading the former, while the latter enjoyed all the happy ſunſhine of proſperity. But Licinius's cruelty againſt the Chriſtians, as well as his treacherous practices with relation to Conſtantine, brought that prince with a great army out of the Weſt againſt him; and he was defeated, taken, and after ſome time put to death. Thus Conſtantine, being now in poſſeſſion of the whole empire, put a final period to this perſecution, which had continued no leſs than twenty years; and, as it was the laſt, being the utmoſt effort of a dying enemy, ſo it was the moſt ſevere of them all*.

The good effects of perſecution are deſcribed by Tertullian, in his apology. Give us now what names you pleaſe, ſays he, from the inſtruments of cruelty by which you torture us; yet let me tell you, when we are thus begirt, and dreſſed about with fire, we are then in our moſt illuſtrious apparel. Theſe are our victorious palms and robes of glory, and mounted upon the funeral pile we look upon ourſelves as in our triumphal chariot. O worſhipful judges, go on with your ſhow of juſtice, and believe me, you will be the more juſt ſtill in the opinion of the people, the oftener you make them a ſacrifice of Chriſtians. Crucify, torture, condemn, grind us to powder if you

* This account of the *ten perſecutions* is taken chiefly from Macknight's Truth of the Goſpel Hiſtory.

can; your injuſtice is an illuſtrious proof of our innocence, and for the confirmation of this it is, that God permits us to ſuffer. But do your worſt, and rack your invention to torture the Chriſtians, it is all to no purpoſe; you do but attract the world, and make it the more in love with our religion; the more you mow us down, the thicker we riſe; the Chriſtian blood you ſpill is like the ſeed you ſow, it ſprings from the earth again, and fructifies the more. That in us which you denominate ſtubbornneſs, has been very ſucceſsful in proſelyting the world; for who has not been ſtruck with this ſight, and from thence induced to look into the reality and reaſon thereof? And whoever well examined our religion, but came over to it? And whoever came over, but was ready to ſuffer for it*?

Several learned men in the firſt ages of the Goſpel appeared in its defence, and their apologies, which were addreſſed to the emperors, were appeals to the reaſon as well as humanity of thoſe for whom they were intended. It is indeed probable, ſays Gregory, in his Hiſtory of the Chriſtian Church, that ſome of them were never honoured by the peruſal of the emperors. But as they contained facts, of which all might eaſily be convinced; as the motives, the ſufferings, and the conduct of the perſecuted Chriſtians were by theſe means more extenſively known, it is highly probable that they alſo, among the cauſes already mentioned, largely contributed to diffuſe the truths of the Goſpel.

* Reeves's Apologies, vol. 1. cap. 50.

A Sketch of the Primitive Chriſtian Church.

What was the Fabric, which was hardly rear'd,
By Aid from Heav'n of Miracles and Grace;
And faith, and pray'r, and toils, and death of Men,
Whoſe higheſt glory was—to ſee it riſe?
Jehovah's Temple! founded in his Truth—
Unequall'd project of th' Eternal Mind—
Symmetrical, cemented ſtrong by love,
Adorn'd with beauty of ſupernal art,
And fill'd with praiſe, which fragrant ſhall aſcend,
As laſting—as its baſis ſhall endure.

THE word ἐκκλησία, as uſed by the writers of the New Teſtament, is applied to the Diſciples of Chriſt in a ſpiritual ſenſe. It uniformly ſignifies one aſſembly or congregation; or ſuch a number of profeſſed Chriſtians as ſtatedly met together, for the worſhip of God, and a participation of the ordinances of the Goſpel. Thus we read of the Church at Corinth, Antioch, Epheſus, Philippi, Coloſſe, Theſſalonica, and other places. When the members of a family were all Chriſtians, or others joined them in religious worſhip, they were called the Church in ſuch a one's houſe. It does not appear that the Apoſtles ever uſed the word, to ſignify a houſe or building, where the Chriſtians aſſembled for devotion: neither is it probable that, in the Apoſtles' days, particular places were ſet apart, or conſecrated for the ſervice of religion, ſo as to be entirely free from all the common uſes of life; for it was not poſſible that they could meet together but by agreement, in ſuch places, and at ſuch times, as might be moſt convenient for all, and expoſe them to the leaſt danger.

Moſes inſtituted the Jewiſh Church; Chriſt the Chriſtian: with the prophesying of the former was ſoon joined the deliverance of Iſrael from Egypt; and with the miniſtry of the latter, that of great multitudes from ſin and miſery. The primitive Chriſtians had the right knowledge of the one only, living, and

true God; alfo of Chrift the Redeemer and Saviour of mankind; and fo were diftinguifhed both from the Heathen, and the Jews. The latter did not only reject, but condemned for blafphemy the true Meffiah, becaufe he afferted himfelf to be the Son of God, and equal with him in nature and perfection. The former as they worfhipped falfe gods, called Chriftians atheifts, and their religion, the Atheifm, becaufe it militated againft the exiftence of their gods. They attacked it on the ground of novelty, as an upftart religion, but of yefterday; and this charge they urged to make it unpopular, and face it down in the world, that ancient opinions and cuftoms might ftill predominate. But Chriftians, in oppofition to all the Polytheifm in the world, alfo the malice, power, fophiftry, and violent proceedings of their combined enemies, ftood firm to this fyftem of doctrines.

Thefe two articles the Scriptures repreffent as fundamental to Chriftian communion. *There is* but *one God*, who hath every natural and moral perfection; fuch as his eternity, immenfity, immutability, omnipotence, omnifcience, independence;—and his wifdom, holinefs, juftice, goodnefs, truth, and faithfulnefs.—The former, for the fake of diftinction, are called incommunicable; and the latter, communicable, becaufe there are fome traces of them in rational creatures; though it is certain that thefe, in that infinite degree they are in him, are as natural to him, and incommunicable, as thofe which are ufually called fo. And there is but *one Mediator between God and men, the man Chrift Jefus; who gave himfelf a ranfom for all, for a teftimony in due time**, viz. of God's abundant love and rich grace to fallen men, and to the truth of his promifes. During the Old Teftament difpenfation it was foretold and promifed, that God would fend a Redeemer and Saviour to a fallen world, and when he did fo, it was a teftimony to the truth of his predictions and promifes, and the riches of his grace in the accomplifhment of them: hence fays

* 1 Tim. ii. 5—6.

Zacharias, He hath *performed the mercy promised to our fathers, and remembered his holy covenant**.

Christ is the beginning, the author, the founder, and foundation of the Christian Church. St. Paul, when speaking of him in his mediatorial capacity, says, *He is the head of the body, the Church*†; *of the church of the first-born, which are written in heaven*‡; i. e. of all true Believers, who are members of the invisible Church, or those, among the great body of Professors, who are born of God; to those he is a Head of government, vital influence, and supply. For all these important purposes, the Apostle shows that he is amply furnished, *For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell*§. Again, *For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the godhead bodily*‖; i. e. In his human nature, the Deity or Godhead, with all its infinite, incomprehensible, and glorious perfections, dwells really or substantially, and not symbolically, as in the Tabernacle and Temple under the Old Testament dispensation, which were types, shadows, and figures of its dwelling really in him. Hence we see, that there are two natures in Christ, the plenitude of the divinity substantially resides in his human nature; and the everlasting union of these natures is imported in the word *dwells*, which, say several eminent Commentators, signifies a permanent and inseparable presence; not like that which the Prophets experienced; and it is styled by the fathers, *an hypostatical union.*

There is no perfection essential to God the Father, but what is in Christ. As *eternity*; he was not only before Abraham, but Adam; he tells us himself, he existed before the world was made; nay, that *he was set up* FROM EVERLASTING¶; and the prophet Micah declares, *his goings forth have been from of old,* FROM EVERLASTING**, or days of eternity:—*omnipotence*; the works of creation, providence, and redemption, the resurrection of the dead, with other things which Christ hath done, loudly proclaim him to be the Almighty:—*omnipresence* or immensity; *no man hath*

* Luke i. 72. † Col. i. 18. ‡ Heb. xii. 23. § Col. i. 19.
‖ Col. ii. 9. ¶ Prov. viii. 23. ** Mic. v. 2.

aſcended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even THE SON OF MAN WHICH IS IN HEAVEN*:—omniſcience; *all the churches ſhall know that I am* HE *which ſearcheth the reins and hearts* †:—immutability; *Jeſus Chriſt the ſame yeſterday, and to-day, and for ever*‡. If any of the perfections of the ſupreme God were not in Chriſt, the *fulneſs, all the fulneſs of the Godhead* could not be ſaid to dwell in him, neither could he be *equal with God*§, as St. Paul has aſſerted. The ſameneſs of eſſence, is juſtly collected from the ſameneſs of attributes. This fulneſs of the Deity poſſeſſed by the Son, is what he naturally and neceſſarily enjoys, by a participation of the ſame undivided nature or eſſence with the Father and Spirit.

In conſequence of Chriſt being both God and man in one perſon, or in the union of his two natures, divine and human, he is abundantly qualified to be the Mediator between God and us; to *be a merciful and faithful High-Prieſt, in the things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the ſins of the people*‖. For being man, he had ſomething to offer in ſacrifice to God, namely, his human nature ſoul and body, and was thereby capable of making ſatisfaction in the nature that ſinned, which the divine law and juſtice required. The holineſs of his human nature admirably fitted him, to be an atoning Saviour and interceding High-Prieſt, and very often in the ſacred writings an emphaſis is put on this; as when it is ſaid, *in him is no ſin*¶, that he *offered himſelf without ſpot to God***. and we are ſaid to be redeemed *with the precious blood of Chriſt, as of a lamb without blemiſh and without ſpot*††. And indeed *ſuch an high-prieſt became us*, and is altogether proper for us, *who is holy, harmleſs, undefiled, ſeparate from ſinners*‡‡. And being God as well as man, there is an all-ſufficient virtue in all his actions and ſufferings, in his obedience and death, to anſwer what they were deſigned for, which was to expiate ſin. In a word, there is nothing wanting in Chriſt to

* John iii. 13. † Rev. ii. 23. ‡ Heb. xiii. 8.
§ Phil. ii. 6. ‖ Heb. ii. 17. ¶ 1 John iii. 5.
** Heb. ix. 14. †† 1 Pet. i. 19. ‡‡ Heb. vii. 26.

render him a complete Saviour, *able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him**.

There is, in Christ Jesus our Lord, a dispensatory communicative fulness; to be dispensed to Believers, according as their exigencies require while in this world, and, in proportion to their faithfulness in service and progress in holiness, in heaven. He is said to be *full of grace and truth*†, *and of his fulness all Believers receive, and grace for grace*‡; i. e. all kinds, every measure, and every supply of grace, that is necessary.

But more particularly: there is in Christ a fulness of the Spirit. *And lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth*§. The Holy Spirit is but one person, but he is in this passage called *seven Spirits*, as he is in other places of the Revelation, because of the perfection of his gifts and graces. *The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, of council and might, and of knowledge*‖, rests upon Christ. He is *anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows*¶; i. e. above any of the sons of men, who are made partakers of the gifts and graces of the Spirit; *for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him***. All those extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, with which the Apostles were filled on the day of Pentecost, were dispensed by Christ, as the Head of the Church. *Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted*, said St. Peter, *and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear*††. When Christ ascended into Heaven, *he received gifts for men*‡‡, and distributed them to the Apostles, particularly to qualify them for their extraordinary work and service. St. Paul says, *He ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things. And he gave some, Apostles: and some, Prophets: and some, Evangelists: and some, pastors and teachers; for*

* Heb. vii. 25. † John i. 14. ‡ John i. 16. § Rev. v. 6. ‖ Isa. xi. 2.
¶ Psa. xlv. 7. ** John iii. 34. †† Acts ii. 33. ‡‡ Psa. lxviii. 18.

*the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ**. And he hath in all ages since, in some degree, been bestowing gifts on men, to qualify them for the work of the ministry, and for the edifying of his body the Church; and *the residue of the Spirit*† is with him.

There is in Christ a fulness of Gospel blessings. All the promises of the new covenant *in him are yea, and in him amen*‡; on which account it is *everlasting, well ordered in all things, and sure.* The dispensation or communication of the benefits of it is committed to him, and therefore Believers are said to be *blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ*§. And these come to us in a very surprising manner; even through his *being made a curse for us, that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles, through Jesus Christ*‖. By his perfect obedience, and atoning death, he fully satisfied divine justice, magnified the law and made it honourable, with which God is well pleased. Though all, by nature and practice, are in a state of guilt and condemnation, yet in Christ there is made a full and blessed provision, for our deliverance and salvation. The atonement is equal to all our guilt, and sufficient to procure full remission. *Through Christ is preached to us the forgiveness of sins*¶. *God hath set him forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past***. For Christ's sake God forgives sinners all their trespasses; to him all who are enlightened, awakened, and penitent, are directed to apply for pardon; and, on their believing, he will bestow it, without any consideration of their works; and they shall be *justified from all things*, from which they could not any other way††. And *blessed is that man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity*‡‡. If there be a blessed man in the world, it is he whose sins God hath pardoned: sin lays

* Eph. iv. 10—13. † Mal. ii. 15. ‡ 2 Cor. i. 20.
§ Eph. i. 3. ‖ Gal. iii. 13—14. ¶ Acts xiii. 38
** Rom. iii. 25. †† Acts xiii. 39. ‡‡ Psa. xxxii. 2.

the foundation of misery, consequently, in the forgiveness of it, that foundation is destroyed. The blessing of the adoption of children is closely connected with that of justification by faith in the blood of Christ. It springs originally from the love of God the Father, *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God**; and the enjoyment of it is owing to the redemption that is in Christ, for he came *to redeem them that were under the law, that they might receive the adoption of sons*†. The right, the liberty, the privilege, and dignity of becoming the sons of God, are actually given forth from Christ, to them who receive and believe in him. *As many as receive him, to them gives he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name*‡. So that they who are *the children of God*, are so *by faith in Christ Jesus*§. All the holiness of the saints is in the hands of Christ. He is their *sanctification* as well as their *righteousness*‖. The first communication of grace producing new habits in the soul, is from him, or from God through him: as are also the exercise, increase, and confirmation of these. By his abundant grace sin is mortified, subdued, and destroyed, and a holy conformity to God in heart and life increased, perfected, and established: which gives a claim to heaven, not indeed by way of merit, but requisite qualification. *Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God*¶. *Without holiness no man shall see the Lord***.—In short, there is in Christ grace to supply all the wants of Believers, to support them under all burdens, and to carry them safely and comfortably through the howling wilderness of this world, which is often bedewed with tears. He is the *Sun of righteousness*††, the source of all the spiritual light we have, which by degrees increases, *shining more and more unto the perfect day*‡‡.—He is the *fountain of* all spiritual *life*§§; from him we receive the living principle of grace, and by him it is maintained unto eternal life. *In him are hid all the*

* 1 John iii. 1. † Gal. iv. 5. ‡ John i. 11. § Gal. iii. 26.
‖ 1 Cor. i. 30. ¶ Matt. v. 8. ** Heb. xii. 14. †† Mal. iv. 2.
‡‡ Prov. iv. 18. §§ Psa. xxxvi. 9. John i. 4.

*treasures of wisdom and knowledge**, and from him they are freely communicated to the saints. *In him there is strength*†, to enable Believers to oppose inward evil, withstand every enemy, exercise the various graces of the Spirit, and discharge every duty. Though *without him they can do nothing*‡, yet *through him strengthening them they can do all things*§. United to him by faith, and receiving out of his fulness, they shall be *fruitful in every good word and work*‖, and endure to the end of this life of trial.——And as Christ dispenses grace to his followers on earth, so on their departure he receives them into glory. The Gospel record is, *that God hath given to us eternal life: and this life is in his Son*¶. Believers are *heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ***, and in him eternal life is given to them. *Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory*††; which will greatly consist in being *like him*, and *seeing him as he is*‡‡. At his appearing, the bodies of the saints will be *fashioned like unto his glorious body*§§. and *shine forth as the sun*, with brightness and lustre, *in the kingdom of their Father*‖‖. And they will be *ever with him*¶¶, *in whose presence there is fulness of joy, at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore***.—— Thus we see that *Christ is the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all*††. He filleth all the members of his mystical body with all needful gifts and graces, until they are filled with all the fulness of God in glory.

Having particularly noticed that Christ is the Head of his body, the Church, and that there is in him an infinite fulness of all grace for amply supplying all the wants of Believers; we shall proceed to consider the internal operations of the Holy Spirit on the human heart, and the real, gracious, and extensive change produced therein, as set forth in the New Testament, which

* Col. ii. 3. † Isa. xlv. 24. ‡ John xv. 5. § Phil. iv. 13.
‖ Col. i. 10. 2 Thess. ii. 17. ¶ 1 John v. 11. ** Rom. viii. 17.
†† John xvii. 24. ‡‡ 1 John iii. 2. §§ Phil. iii. 11. ‖‖ Matt. xiii. 43.
¶¶ 1 Thess. iv. 17. ** Psa. xvi. 11. †† Eph. i. 22, 23.

will give us more correct views of primitive Christianity, and the Church of Christ. God is great and his works glorious, being the effects of infinite wisdom, power, and goodness. Hence says the Psalmist, *Among the gods there is none like unto thee, O Lord, neither are there any works like unto thy works**. Among the works of nature, that of creation is the most admirable; among those of grace, that of man's redemption and salvation. The latter is the most glorious, chiefly on two accounts, first, because of the active opposition made against it, not only by the rebellious sons of men, headed by the powers of darkness; but likewise from God's vindictive justice, unspotted holiness, righteous and violated law: and secondly, on account of the conspicuous discoveries that are made therein of infinite wisdom, ineffable love, and unmerited goodness. In this work all the Persons in the Divine essence show themselves in the most astonishing and endearing manner; not only to make the fullest display of the glory of the Deity in general, but likewise of each person in the Godhead in particular, that they might be distinctly and unitedly adored by saints and angels for ever and ever. Had it not been for this work, perhaps the wonderful mystery of the Trinity had never been revealed with such evidence, and advantage as now it is. The origin or beginning of our salvation is from God the Father, the execution or purchase of it is by the Son, and the application of it by the Holy Ghost.

The renovation of the heart of a real Christian is expressed in terms which prove it to be the work of God's Spirit. It is called a creation, *Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness*†. It is emphatically styled a new birth: *Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth*‡. *Blessed be the God, and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again*§. And Believers are said to be born of God, to the exclusion of all other efficient causes, *Who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of*

* Psa. lxxxvi. 8. † Eph. iv. 24. ‡ James i. 18. § 1 Pet. i. 3.

*the will of man, but of God**. Our Saviour expressly attributes it to the Holy Ghost, *Except a man be born of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the Spirit, is spirit*, i. e. spiritual†. In short, none but God by his Spirit can effect this work; *with men this is impossible*, all moral argument, and the best human endeavours, will fall short; *but with him all things are possible*‡.

It is remarkably to the purpose in hand, that the Holy Spirit throughout the Scriptures, takes his own denominations from the several names given to the work of renovation, or parts (if the expression may be allowed) of which the new nature consists. *The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance*§. He is styled *the Spirit of wisdom, and revelation*‖, of *love*¶, of *meekness***, of *the fear of the Lord*††. Hope is said to be *through the power of the Holy Ghost*‡‡, and we often read of *joy in the Holy Ghost*§§. Thus the new nature, in its various ways of acting, is expressly attributed to the Holy Spirit, who by his own almighty power effectually renews sinners. When I say, he is the sole Author of this work, I mean not exclusively of the Father, and the Son; for the three Divine Persons are undivided in all their external works; but that he is so to the exclusion of men, ministers, and angels.

The Holy Spirit performs this work of renovation in sinners, by a real and immediate efficiency. It has been asserted that conversion is effected by those motives and arguments which the Gospel propounds, and that ministers manage well, when setting them in their true light, to engage their hearers to the exercise of faith, and the pursuit of holiness. But certainly such is the vanity of men's minds, the deep and universal depravity of their hearts, the power and prevalence of sin, and temptations to commit it, that after all the arguments of the Gospel, managed in the most skilful manner by the ablest ministers, proposed in the

* John i. 13. † John iii. 5, 6. ‡ Matt. xix. 26. § Gal. v. 22, 23.
‖ Eph. i. 17. ¶ Col. i. 8. ** Gal. vi. 1. †† Heb. xi. 2.
‡‡ Rom. xv. 13. §§ Rom. xiv. 9.

clearest light, and urged with the greatest warmth of oratory, and agreeableness of affection, there is an absolute necessity of the influences of the Holy Spirit to change and renew human nature. The best of ministers, nay were angels the preachers, they could no more do it, by all the most cogent arguments in their power, than they could, by these, make the blind to see, or the dead to rise out of his grave.—It is true, the Holy Ghost makes use of the Gospel as the means of his renewing sinners, which is well adapted and sufficient to that end; but still he must by it put forth a real, proper, immediate influence and energy on the soul, in order to its renovation, else it never will be renewed. Hence the Apostle constantly ascribes the whole efficacy of the Gospel, and the ministry thereof, to God, by the Spirit. *The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds. Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ**. And to the Thessalonians he says, *Our Gospel* (i. e. the Gospel of Christ preached by us,) *came not unto you in word only, but also in power*, but then he immediately adds, *and in the Holy Ghost*†, to assure them that the whole of its efficacy was entirely owing to the Divine Spirit.

The Holy Spirit, in his work of renewing sinners, infuses into them spiritual life. Men are naturally *dead in trespasses and sins*, and therefore in order to their acting in a holy and spiritual manner, a living principle of that nature must be communicated to them. Hence the saints are said to be *quickened*, and inspired with new and divine life. I take grace to be, not, properly speaking, various and distinct habits seated in our minds, but one spiritual principle in the soul, capable of exerting itself, in various modes, after diverse ways, putting forth itself in various operations, or ways of working, according to the variety of objects, on which it is exercised. The principle is one,

* 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. † 1 Thess. i. 5.

but its exerciſes, and the objects on which theſe terminate are many and various and ſometimes the ſame object, conſidered under different relations, gives different denominations to the actings of this implanted principle.

The Holy Spirit firſt convinces ſinners of their crimes, then impreſſes them with a piercing ſenſe of their guilt, ſhews them the demerit of ſin, and that *its wages is eternal death**. He further makes them ſenſible, of the abſolute impoſſibility of their contributing, in the leaſt degree, to their recovery out of this miſerable condition. Hereupon they are brought to cry out with the Jailor, *What ſhall we do to be ſaved?* On their making this inquiry, the Holy Spirit diſcovers Chriſt in his ſuitableneſs, ability, and tenderneſs, as equally able and willing *to ſave to the uttermoſt, all that come to God by him.* Such important, ſeaſonable, and encouraging diſcoveries, beget in them a reſolution to look for ſalvation no other way, than through the merits of Chriſt, on the ſole ground of his atonement and ſatisfaction. In a diligent uſe of all the means of grace, and *through the faith of the operation of God*†, they obtain pardon, are accepted in the Beloved, and enjoy divine peace.—Now the mind of the Believer is renewed by the Holy Ghoſt, and enabled to diſcern ſpiritual things in a pleaſing and affecting manner. The will is conformed to the will of God; his language is, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do*‡? The *affections* are elevated, and *ſet on things above, where Chriſt ſitteth on the right hand of* God§.—Though the ſoul is the firſt proper ſubject of this renovating principle, yet the body alſo partakes of its renewing influence, and all its *members become inſtruments of righteouſneſs unto God*‖. In ſhort, it entirely changes the nature: therefore the Apoſtle prays for the Theſſalonians in theſe words, *The very God of peace ſanctify you wholly: and I pray God your whole ſpirit, and ſoul, and body be preſerved blameleſs unto the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*¶. This divine

* Rom. vi. 23. † Col. ii. 12. ‡ Acts ix. 6.
§ Col. iii 1, 2. ‖ Rom. vi. 13. ¶ 1 Theſſ. v. 23.

principle *leaveneth the whole lump*, the whole man; infuſeth itſelf as far as the infection of ſin had ſpread, and rectifies and ſets right all the powers and faculties of man, into which ſin had introduced diſorder and deformity; ſo that he is *transformed by the renewing of his mind, that he may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God**.—This ſpiritual life in the ſoul, is the powerful ſpring of new actions,---actions, acceptable to God through Jeſus Chriſt. *We are his workmanſhip, created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we ſhould walk in them*†. Should any one ſay, Can an unregenerate, unrenewed man do no good action nor work? I anſwer, he may do many works that are materially good, being things that are commanded of God, and for which he may be rewarded with temporal bleſſings: but nothing is more certain than, that he can do no work that is ſpiritually good, that God will be pleaſed with, and reward with eternal life in Heaven, for want of a principle of Grace in his heart, by which alone ſuch can be performed. *They that are in the fleſh cannot pleaſe God*‡, becauſe they want faith, *which worketh by love*§, *is the evidence of things not ſeen*‖, productive of holineſs, and *without which it is impoſſible to pleaſe God*¶.

Having conſidered the ſpiritual ſtate of the Church, we ſhall now attend to its poſitive inſtitutions and external rites. Something of this ſort ſeems neceſſary in religion, both for continuing and propagating the profeſſion thereof, and conveying its doctrines and principles with a ſtronger and more lively impreſſion into the minds of men.---But the rites and forms of moſt of the religions which have been in the world, inſtead of advancing true piety, have unhappily had, either no relation to that purpoſe, or been the means of defeating it. This is notoriouſly true of the religious rites of the Heathen, many of which (being of their own invention) were fooliſh and ridiculous, and

* Rom. xii. 2. † Eph. ii. 10. ‡ Rom. viii. 8.
§ Gal. v. 6. ‖ Heb. xi. 1. ¶ Heb. xi. 6.

ſeveral of them evidently impious and immoral.—The rites and ceremonies of the Jews, even thoſe that were of Divine inſtitution, though originally well intended, by their multiplicity and great variety, too much engroſſed the mind, and engaged the attention of that people, and at laſt ſhut out almoſt all ſolid piety and goodneſs from among them; eſpecially after the traditions of the Elders were ſuperadded.—The poſitive and ritual inſtitutions of Chriſtianity are but few, and theſe conſpicuouſly ſhow the wiſdom and goodneſs of Chriſt, in his appointing and enjoining a peculiar obſervation thereof: they require nothing but what is plain and eaſy, and contribute to the advancement of real piety and morality, much better than thoſe of any other religion.

Baptiſm is an inſtitution of our Saviour, to which, though he had no ſin to waſh away, he ſubmitted, and God owned the ordinance, and made it the ſeaſon of pouring forth the Holy Spirit upon him. It ſucceeded in the place of circumciſion, and was a ſeal of the Chriſtian covenant, as that was of the one made with Abraham. It was conſidered as an initiatory rite, admitting perſons to the enjoyment of all the privileges of the Chriſtian religion. The perſons baptized were generally adults; but Voſſius, Dr. Forbes, Dr. Hammond, and eſpecially Mr. Wall, (who has thoroughly conſidered the teſtimony and authority of almoſt every ancient writer, that has ſaid any thing upon the ſubject,) endeavour to evince, that infants were baptized even in the apoſtolic age. The perſon to be baptized was aſked, firſt, Whether he abjured the Devil and all his works? ſecondly, Whether he gave a firm aſſent to all the articles of the Chriſtian faith? to both which he anſwered in the affirmative. Then the rite was performed; wherein, by being ſprinkled or waſhed with water, in the name of the Holy Trinity, he ſolemnly gave himſelf up to God, through his Son, to be governed by the doctrines he taught, in expectation of the ſtrengthening and cleanſing influences of that Holy Spirit, whoſe miraculous gifts proved the truth of the Goſpel; and whereby he was, not only obliged to for-

ſake all ſin, but reminded of the neceſſity of inward purity, in order to preſent and future happineſs. In the earlieſt ages of the Church, there was no ſtated time nor place for this purpoſe: afterwards, Eaſter, Whitſuntide, and Epiphany, became ſolemn ſeaſons, to which the ordinance was confined, except in caſes of neceſſity. On a perſon receiving baptiſm, he had given him a white garment, to denote his being waſhed from the defilements of ſin; from which cuſtom, the feaſt of Pentecoſt came to be called WHITSUNDAY, i. e. *White Sunday*. This garment was afterwards preſerved by the Church, that it might be an evidence againſt him, if he violated or denied that faith which he had owned in baptiſm.

The *Lord's Supper* is a poſitive inſtitution, the beneficial deſign of which is obvious. It was highly expedient, that ſo great a tranſaction as the death of the Son of God ſhould be kept in a lively and perpetual remembrance. Breaking the bread, and pouring out the wine, aſſiſt the partakers thereof more clearly and affectingly to diſcern the Lord's body, in a ſtate of ſuffering: and the frequent eating and drinking, in commemoration of his death and love, tend to excite and eſtabliſh their faith of the Goſpel; (the truth of which he confirmed with his blood;) their love and gratitude to the Redeemer; their abhorrence of ſin, which he died to put away; a juſt contempt of the honours and pleaſures of the world, in compariſon of the honour of God, and the good of mankind; an undiſſembled love to each other, for them the common Saviour died; a deſire to preſs on towards the perfection of holineſs, and reach ſuch a meaſure of it, as is worthy the deſign of his death. Theſe things are of ſo great importance in the Chriſtian life, that they prove the Lord's Supper a wiſe and gracious ordinance, and well adapted to promote the ends deſigned.

The *Goſpel-miniſtry* is an excellent part of the Chriſtian inſtitution; miniſters are an order of men whoſe peculiar buſineſs it is, to perform in the beſt manner the public offices of religion; to ſtudy more exactly its great truths and rules; to repre-

ſent them in the cleareſt and moſt affecting light to others, and excite them to believe in and practiſe every evangelical command. The origin, deſign, and duration of the Goſpel-miniſtry, are ſet forth in a paſſage already quoted. It was inſtituted by the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, *He gave ſome, Apoſtles: ſome, prophets: ſome, evangeliſts: and ſome, paſtors and teachers*: the purpoſes or ends for which he gave them, *for the perfecting of the ſaints, for the work of the miniſtry, and for edifying the body of Chriſt*: and concerning its duration, it is to be continued, *till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt.* This is a divine and eſtabliſhed appointment, provided for enlightening the world throughout all generations. *Lo*, ſaid our Saviour concerning his own miniſters, *I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world* *. The advantage of this inſtitution is ſo evident, that it is almoſt unneceſſary to ſay any thing to illuſtrate it: for if public worſhip is a duty, as moſt certainly it is, for the preſervation of the knowledge and profeſſion of Chriſtianity in the world, for the fixing of deep impreſſions of its doctrines and precepts in the minds of men, and for the promoting of mutual eſteem, friendſhip, and love among Chriſtians, there muſt be perſons appointed, to perform the public parts thereof. The circumſtances of mankind require this office: to inſtruct their ignorance, help their weakneſs, oppoſe their evil propenſities, rouſe their attention to duty, and aſſiſt them in, and encourage them to the practice thereof. Had miniſters of the Goſpel, generally taken care to be duly qualified with grace and gifts for their employment, kept cloſe to, and diligently diſcharged it, their greateſt enemies muſt have acknowledged the uſefulneſs of their function. For it is eaſy to diſcern, that all the clamours againſt them are on the account of their inability for the work, their neglecting it, or the immorality of their lives.—However, we ſhould

* Matt. xxviii. 20.

be thankful to our Lord Jesus Christ for favouring us with so necessary and useful an institution, and endeavour to improve it to our own spiritual advantage. St. Paul mentions it as a great instance of the Divine favour and goodness. *All things*, says he, *are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry* as the great means of discovering, offering, and bringing to effect, this *reconciliation**.

And lastly, the institution of the *Christian Sabbath* is deserving of our attention.—When God had made the world, and furnished it with a variety of creatures, suited to the different elements of which it was composed, he last of all created Man after his own image, (endued with reasonable faculties,) whom he therefore constitued lord over them, that, viewing and admiring the works of creation, he might thereby be raised to adore the great and beneficent Creator.—Of Man thus created, and situated in a world beautifully adorned, and plentifully stored with all things necessary and delightful, he exacted a reasonable service, which consisted in the worship of himself, the one only true God, in celebrating the displays of his almighty power, infinite wisdom, and ineffable goodness, in all his wonderful works.—And he seems to have prescribed and set apart a portion of time, for the more immediate and solemn exercise thereof: by the constant and regular observation of which, a just sense of his adorable perfections, the remembrance of his astonishing works, and the true worship of him, might be retained in the world. —But when, through the iniquity and idolatry of succeeding generations, this particular stated time for religious service, became forgotten, and divine worship neglected by the generality of mankind, he then revealed and instituted a religion, appointed the manner of worship to be used in it; and, by a special law, fixed a stated time, for the more particular exercise thereof, also to be a criterion of the worshippers of the almighty Creator of all things. The day thus appro-

* 2 Cor. v. 18.

priated and conſecrated was called the Sabbath, on account of the Reſt required to be ſtrictly obſerved thereon, and a command to all to obſerve and ſanctify it.

From the beginning of the world to the reſurrection of Chriſt, the ſeventh day of the week was the Sabbath; ever ſince, Chriſtians have obſerved the firſt day of the week. If there be a greater work than that of creation, to be remembered and celebrated, it tends much to the advancing of the glory of God, that a day be appointed for the expreſs purpoſe thereof. And if *all men ſhould honour the Son, even as they honour the Father**, then it is expedient that the day, on which he reſted from the work of redemption, or, as the Apoſtle ſays, *ceaſed from his own works, as God did from his*†, ſhould be ſet apart for his honour. The Sabbath was actually changed, by Chriſt who is *Lord of it*‡, from the ſeventh to the firſt day of the week. If any ſhould inquire, when it was that he gave inſtructions to his Apoſtles concerning this? we may anſwer, it was during that interval of time, in which *he ſhowed himſelf alive after his paſſion, by many infallible proofs; being ſeen of them forty days, and ſpeaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God*§, of which we may reckon the change of the Sabbath to have been one. But if any ſhould reckon this not ſufficient, for the confirming our faith therein, let it be conſidered, that on the firſt day of the week our Saviour roſe from the dead, and it was celebrated as a ſabbath, by him and his Apoſtles, after his reſurrection. On this day, the Holy Ghoſt in a moſt miraculous manner was poured down upon the Apoſtles. *And the firſt day of the week, when the Diſciples came together to break bread,* i. e, to receive the Lord's ſupper, *Paul preached unto them*‖. This was not a private, but a public meeting of the Church; nor was it a day occaſionally appointed by the Apoſtle, but the ſtated uſual time of the Chriſtians meeting together for religious worſhip. St. Paul had continued there, (at Troas,) ſeven days; why did not they meet, and he preach to them on

* John v. 23. † Heb. iv. 10. ‡ Matt. xii. 8.
§ Acts i. 3. ‖ Acts xx. 7.

the seventh day of the week, on which he was there, but because it was no longer the Sabbath, but changed to the first day. It was on this Day that the first Christians made their collections for the poor*. The apostle John says, *I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day*†. He gives it this denomination because the Lord Christ had appointed it to be the Sabbath for his followers; which his Church has ever since continued to observe, and has been highly favoured with the Divine presence.

The sacred Historian has recorded the amiable state of the first Christians, who were united in the bond of love. *They continued stedfast in the Apostles' doctrine and the fellowship, and the breaking of bread, and the prayers. And they continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness, and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people*‡. And again, when the Church was greatly increased, *The multitude of them that believed, were of one heart, and of one soul: neither said any of them, that ought of the things which he possessed, was his own, but they had all things common.* Great grace was upon them all, *neither was there any among them that lacked. For as many as were possessors of lands, or houses, sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the Apostles feet. And distribution was made to every man according as he had need*§. We do not read of any positive command to do this: it naturally and necessarily resulted, says a late pious and eminent writer, from the degree of love which they enjoyed. Here was a proper Christian Church; possessed of genuine piety, beautiful simplicity, fervent love, and unexampled liberality.

The first blemish that appeared, was the love of money, as in the case of Ananias and Sapphira:—then partiality, or respect of persons, among those who had the distribution of the money; largely supplying those of their own nation, while the other *wi-*

* Cor. xvi. 1, 2. † Rev. ii. 10. ‡ Acts ii. 41—37. § Acts iv. 32—35.

dows, who were not Hebrews, *were neglected in the daily adminiſtration**. Hence *there aroſe in the Grecians a murmuring among them*; not only diſcontent and hard thoughts, but unkind expreſſions. Some time after, the Chriſtians were perplexed and agitated by means of ſome who zealouſly contended for the ceremonial law, till the firſt ſynod at Jeruſalem put an end to the ſpreading evil.—Among the Chriſtians at Corinth, ſtrong animoſities and bitter contentions took place, reſpecting the abilities and uſefulneſs of miniſters; and ſome had fallen into groſs vices.—And from the Apoſtolical Epiſtles, and writings of the Chriſtian Fathers, it is eaſy to ſee how *the enemy ſowed tares among the wheat*, and *the myſtery of iniquity did work*. This is not more than might be expected, conſidering the vaſt multitudes that embraced the Chriſtian faith. Yet among the Chriſtians there certainly was a very large number that adorned their religious profeſſion, in their life and converſation. Whatever were the defects of ſome, Chriſtianity remained the ſame, and the ſins of Chriſtians ſhould be attributed to their want of piety, and not to the religion which they profeſs.

Thus previous to the reign of Tiberius, we learn, that there was no religion in the world to oppoſe that of the Jews, and the idolatry of the Gentiles, but both were enjoyed unmoleſted. Judea was the country which gave birth to our Saviour; and the ſcene of his miniſtry, miracles, ſufferings, death, reſurrection, and aſcenſion. From that time, in all kinds of books, Chriſtians are mentioned, alſo their opinions, and numbers, with their endeavours to ſubvert the eſtabliſhed religions, the perſecutions they endured on that account, and the general eſtabliſhment of their faith throughout the Roman empire. The origin, progreſs, and ſtate of Chriſtianity in the firſt ages, are facts ſupported by indiſputable evidence;—national records, public monuments, and hiſtorical veracity.

The glorious triumph of this holy religion, on its firſt promulgation, is a convincing evidence that it is

* Acts vi. 1.

from God. The Apostles, destitute of the advantages of birth, education, and fortune,---without secular terrors to affright, pecuniary rewards to bribe, or dazling eloquence to enchant,---armed with nothing but faith, truth, and goodness,---encountered the power of princes, the bigotry of priests, the learning of philosophers, the rage of the populace, and the prejudices of all; and were honoured with amazing success! All the literary acquirements and sarcasm of the Greeks and Romans were employed to ridicule the Gospel, and prevent its progress; and the potentates of the earth drew the sword against it, and armed their legions for the destruction of the professors thereof, but without accomplishing their designs: which evidently argues an extraordinary interposition of God.---Had the infidel wits of the present age seen the Apostles, when entering on their arduous and unexampled labours, they would have derided the attempt, and said, as Sanballat did, long before, *What will these feeble Jews do*?* but had they seen the event, surely they must have owned, with the Egyptian Magi in a less illustrious miracle, *This is the finger of God**.

It is a distinguishing instance of the Divine goodness towards us, that we live under this last and most gracious dispensation to mankind: which affords greater assistance for living a pious and holy life, than was ever given under any former one. Our Saviour told his Disciples, that the ancient patriarchs, and prophets, and other holy men had earnestly desired, and would have greatly rejoiced, in those clear and important truths, which he made known to the world‡. But it pleased God to reserve them, as peculiar blessings, for those who should live after the coming of his Son, and the promulgation of the Gospel.---Every assistance, for superior attainments in religion, carries with it an obligation to improvement; and requires suitable returns of gratitude, love, and obedience.

As Jesus Christ, in his mediatorial character, is invested with all power, we may justly conclude, that he will ever maintain his government; the beneficial effects of which shall be fully answered, notwithstanding

* Neh. iv. 2. † Exod. viii. 19. ‡ Matt. 13. 17.

the utmoſt oppoſition, which the policy, malice, and rage of his enemies can poſſibly raiſe againſt it.—The efforts of infidels, to oppoſe and ſuppreſs the Goſpel, will end only in their own confuſion and overthrow; while Divine truth ſhall prevail, until all nations ſhall be ſubdued by its power, and filled with its radiancy. As miniſters are the chief inſtruments for accompliſhing its benevolent deſigns, it is very gratifying to ſee them living in its ſpirit, zealous for its intereſt, diligent in their high vocation, and ſucceſsful in winning ſouls. The Spirit of faith, love, and holy animation is poured out from on high; and in various parts of the earth the Goſpel is victorious over all the oppoſition raiſed againſt it. And ſoon all the chaff of mere human impoſitions ſhall be ſwept away, the ſpirit of party and rancour die, Chriſtians come nearer each other in love, infidels lay down their worn-out weapons, nations, on the baſis of piety, friendſhip, and commerce, forget their political feuds, *and the Lord be one, and his name one. The wilderneſs and the ſolitary place ſhall be glad, and the deſert rejoice, and bloſſom as the roſe: they ſhall ſee the glory of the* LORD, *and the excellency of our God. The earth ſhall be full of the knowledge of the* LORD, *as the waters cover the ſea.*

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